THE LITTLE TOWN

Especially in its Rural Relationships

HARLAN PAUL DOUGLASS

A. T. Howard

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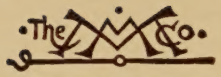
THE LITTLE TOWN



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SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA

THE LITTLE TOWN

ESPECIALLY IN ITS RURAL RELATIONSHIPS

BY

HARLAN PAUL DOUGLASS

Secretary American Missionary Association

Author of "The New Home Missions," etc.

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TO

SEVEN LITTLE IOWA TOWNS

OSAGE, CLEAR LAKE, GRINNELL, BLAIRSBURG,
TIPTON, MANSON AND AMES—ALSO TO
MACHIAS, MAINE

PREFACE

This book has grown out of the author's interest in rural progress. For a number of years, in common with large numbers of his fellow Americans, he has been thinking and talking—sometimes publicly—about this great problem. As his thinking gradually clarified he became aware that neither he nor the others were dealing adequately with the phase of American life which he knew most about by experience, namely, the life of the little town. There is a new wealth of impulse and inspiration for the dweller in the open country. Most of it is equally applicable to the little town. But the author does not feel that, in its present form, it would greatly encourage him if he were still living in such a town.

This book attempts to suggest in what infinite variety the gospel of rural progress applies to the little town. Country-life evangelists do not ordinarily regard it as any part of their business to address the town directly—unless to scold it. They treat it rather as an incidental, and indeed a trivial thing. The ruralist priest and equally the urban Levite have their own important business. They lend a glance to the little town's needs, but pass by on the other side. At most they only toss a casual word in its direction, to which the little town can only reply, "Did you speak to me? I am not conscious

of answering to your description. I do not recognize myself as coming under your classifications."

This book on the contrary aims first of all to address the little town mind directly. It proposes its solutions in terms of little town qualities and capacities. It tries to direct the deluge of civic good counsel and to apply its multitude of helpful suggestions in such fashion that the little town will have to say, "This means me."

Secondly, the book seeks to discover and release new motive for civic betterment. It does not expect the little town to improve simply because of intellectual conviction that it ought to be improved. There will be no adequate motive without new vision. In itself the little town is indeed incidental and largely decrepit and dying. But the author, for one, is convinced that in it lies most of the natural leadership for the betterment of the open country. The rural progress cause hangs on the fortunes of the little towns. Their interests need radical re-direction countryward. Let the town become rurally-minded and it will tap fresh streams of purpose and find vast re-enforcement for its own struggle. The big, romantic, beautiful country, the home of most of the American people, the cradle of its ancient virtues, the seedbed of social permanencies and strength, the source of daily bread for us all—the country is infinitely worth redeeming. But if the country, then also the little town, the country's capital. Doubtless it can be saved only in the consciousness of its relationship to country interests. Reverently it must say "For their sakes I sanctify myself."

The author would hardly have ventured on just another civic improvement book. No originality is

claimed for the specific items in the current program of town betterment. Yet one can not but feel the strange lack of comprehensiveness and logic in the existing literature as a whole. The betterment hints crowding the pages of periodicals are necessarily presented piecemeal. Books are often thrown together with many vital interests lacking. In contrast with this the author has tried to supply implicitly at least the ghost of a theory of democratic civic progress and has aimed at some systematic consideration of civic problems in their essential relationships. If the results are of value it is not for system's sake, but as an aid to clearness of exposition and as a point of departure.

As to form and matter alike I have profited greatly by the discussions of the substance of the book by a group of Oregon teachers and clergymen, before whom it was originally presented. I am indebted to many thinkers in the rural life field, with the apparent philosophy of most of whom I am not able to agree. Especially is my thanks due to my colleague in the American Missionary Association, Miss Lura Beam, whose intelligent, sympathetic and persistent help has made this book finally possible.

New York, 1918.

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THE LITTLE TOWN

THE LITTLE TOWN

I

THE LITTLE TOWN

FAIR PLAY FOR THE LITTLE TOWN

Somewhere between the country and city lies that which is neither, but which partakes on a petty scale of the nature of both—the little town. After the isolation of one leaves off, but before the congestion of the other begins, comes this neuter, sharing the contempt which follows its class. The world regards it as a sort of unsexed creature; or at best, as a negligible buffer state—a Belgium or a Poland—impotent between its mighty neighbours, with few rights which they are bound to respect.

There are twelve thousand such places in the United States, their life characterized by simple complexity, their people a distinct and mediating human type. More than twelve million Americans live in them and they supply the fundamental institutions of civilization for uncounted millions more.

As they have collectively impressed the nation, these petty places have won two verdicts which have become a by-word and an example: the little town is ugly; the little town is bad. "That abomination, the shameless,

unpatriotic, filthy small town," exclaims the president of the American Civic Association. "God made the country, man the city, but the devil the little town": so runs the damnatory proverb.

There is much to superficial view which seemingly justifies these verdicts, and too much of fundamental truth, which the farther discussion must needs confess. But neither the memories of the Seven Towns which are the background of this book, nor yet the systematic studies which it has involved, persuade the author that popular opinion in this matter is either adequate or fair. The little town is of one piece with all the rest of the world, something between the Worst and the Best, a fair field for Honour and Dishonour, and capable of being made at least a little better. How much more than a little the succeeding chapters attempt to reveal.

THE POINT OF VIEW

Inadequacy of "Urban" vs. "Rural." The parsimonious instinct of the human mind impels it to classify everything as either this or that. Thus, in the United States Census the entire population is by residence either "urban" or "rural." This classification ignores the little town and obscures its significance. True the Census has had an uneasy conscience on this point, shifting the boundary between city and country now from eight-thousand population to four-thousand, and from four-thousand to twenty-five hundred; and all along confessing (in small type) that there is a third something not justly dealt with in its divisions. Nevertheless this general usage prevails. The whole of America is either country or city; and the little town, in thought,

is divided between the two or temporarily attached now to the one, now to the other.

Serious thinking on social matters ought not to have been caught by this superficiality of classification. Its business was to be fundamental and to avoid inaccurate popular distinctions. But on the whole it has followed blindly. There are hundreds of studies of all aspects of the urban and the rural problems, from which information applicable to the little town may be sifted; but no literature of the little town itself exists, except in faintest beginnings.

The City's Neglect and Contempt. From the urban viewpoint the little town is colourless and insignificant. The city has its own magnificent advocates and interpreters, who condescend occasionally to the little-town point of view. Thus *The American City* in 1913 began rather apologetically a minor department under the caption "Town and Village," in which the civic interests of the smaller municipalities were featured. By 1915 the department had developed into a separate edition of this periodical, devoting ten or a dozen pages per month to the distinctive interest of the smaller places. But in the main the city is not interested to think out civic problems on the little-town scale. If, for example, there are four corners to be improved, it likes to assume that the land is worth $12,000 per acre and the improvements $35,000 per corner—which quite possibly is more than the total physical value of the little town. Yet the little town has its own four corners. The city is too busy and too proud to tell it how to treat them. Moreover it naturally views the little town through its own eyes, as a rather contemptible miniature of itself,

rather than in its profounder rural relationships.

The Country's Equivocation. It is at the hands of the country-life movement, however, that the little town has suffered most unreasonably. That movement is immeasurably important and justly popular. But it is guilty of an amazing looseness of utterance in matters concerning which it feels most deeply. Rural betterment, rural beauty, rural co-operation, the country home, the country school, the country church,—all are equivocal terms because usually they do not tell whether they concern the life of the village centre or the strikingly dissimilar life of the open farm land. In its most authoritative current interpretations, a country church is any church in a community of less than twenty-five hundred people; no matter how differently the people feel—and they feel very differently indeed—or how differently they act from the people of the open country.

So far as it at all acknowledges the little town as a distinct phenomenon, the rural life movement does so only to execrate or bewail. The farmer is its hero; the middleman its villain. Around these two it has written a thrilling plot, which while interesting is not wholly true to fact. An official partisanship for the extreme rustic aspect of non-urban life has developed. It has rooted in some of the departments of the Federal Government, and has already become pernicious, because it is hardening into a social philosophy dictating practical policies. The consequences of some of these policies are acute.

Dogmatic Ruralism. The deeper characteristics of the prevailing philosophy of ruralism sharply contrast

with its attractive superficial impressions. Its dominant tendencies are admirably summarized by Prof. C. J. Galpin: "'Keep the boy on the farm.' There goes with this cry the demand that the farm home shall be 'brighter,' country schools shall be 'redirected toward the land,' business shall be 'co-operative,' religion shall be 'social.' This program of pure ruralism when sifted shows a characteristic kernel, namely, segregation of the farm population; keep the farmer a pure country man; erect his schools in cornfields; build his churches in the far open; create an agricultural class consciousness; restrict farm business largely to co-operation of farmers; in fine, do the American farm population up in tinfoil."[1]

Cornfield High Schools. Consider how this philosophy works out in the immeasurably important field of public education. Where for example, is the country boy's high school to be found? The towns have high schools; the state may permit the townships to send their children to them at public expense or may encourage the town to gather the surrounding country with it into a legal high school district. The rabid rural partisan will have none of this. The town's high schools are so distrusted by him that he seriously proposes to ignore them with its other institutions, and to establish throughout America a complete, duplicatory series of rural high schools, whose environment and outlook shall be exclusively agricultural.[2] It will be expensive at least to allow this demand and to ignore the fact that the town is already the natural centre of the very rural

[1] University of Wisconsin Research Bulletin No. 34, p. 32.

[2] Betts and Hall, "Better Rural Schools," p. 259 ff; Foght, "The American Rural School," p. 320 ff.

life which it is proposed to keep away from it. For sheer economy's sake it would seem better to study how to improve and to utilize the little town rather than to give it up in disgust.

Beginning to Give the Town Its Due. From two sources chiefly the recognition of the little town in a more balanced and reasonable version of the country-betterment program, is beginning to appear. Of the American sections, New England alone in her local government has always linked town- or village-centre with the open country. New England agriculture primitively was largely carried on by village communities rather than in isolation. Her average population is dense and her farms still small. New England institutions therefore have already transcended the gulf between town and farm land, and the version of the country life program proceeding from New England assumes the organization of social life around centres rather than the prevalence of rural isolation.[3]

But it has remained for the Middle West, especially in the rural social studies of the University of Wisconsin, adequately to discover the place of the little town as a factor in American life, and to propose its economic and moral relations to the surrounding country as the fundamental basis of social reconstruction for the greater half of our nation. The indebtedness of this book to these studies will amply appear in later chapters.

The Town's Distinctive Place and Outlook. This book proposes, however, a still more radical advocacy of

[3] See Hartman, Village Problems and Characteristics, in *Annals of the Am. Academy of Political and Social Science*, XV, p. 234 f.

the right of the little town to be viewed independently. As in any special study, it will be necessary to abstract the subject of investigation from its setting in the larger social life of the nation, and to hold it up for minute examination as though it were a thing apart. Then it must be put back into its vital relations—where it belongs. What is gained will be an ineffaceable sense of its unique characteristics. Thus with the little town: there is something lacking in the country life message which will be remedied only by recognizing towns as natural rural centres. But the town is more than centre. It has a life of its own. In a typical Wisconsin community where a town and its surrounding farming population use common institutions, the town furnishes just half the population. They do half the trading—which means approximately half the eating, working, playing, sleeping. The conditions of their living and working are in obvious respects quite different from those of the farmer. What wonder then, in spite of their close ties and use of common institutions, if they acquire a distinctive group consciousness, a town point of view. Why should they not?

"**Tertium Quid.**" Such confessedly is the viewpoint of this book. In the interests alike of social accuracy and a social welfare, it wants to break with the unscientific pre-occupation of the nation with the distinctions "urban," and "rural," and to shake the little town out of the apologetic and brow-beaten attitude in which it cowers at present. It proposes especially to assert the usefulness and dignity of the little town as standing between and serving both extremes. Its urban outlook

is as legitimate as its rural outlook. The little town is neither to be segregated from the rural population nor with it. By being itself first of all, it is best fitted to become conscious of and to share the life of the nation and the world.

The Town's Chief Function. The more radically the little town adopts the independent point of view the more adequately may it return later to a comprehension of its chief task; namely, the service of the open country on which it depends. After all this is its largest task. The material fortunes of the little town and open country are identical; their achievements should be common. To fulfil its reasonable service the little town must appreciate and love the country. On the whole it does not do so. This constitutes its chief moral problem. Socially speaking, it is the problem of making the little town the centre alike of inspiration and of administration in the reconstruction of rural civilization.

THE FIELD AND ITS LIMITS

The Minimum of Town Character. The definition of the little town which the book assumes is confessedly somewhat arbitrary and a reason will naturally be asked for it. It concerns incorporated places of less than five thousand people. Many incorporations to be sure have very little social justification, yet somebody must have felt that their group-interests constituted them a body of people different from their neighbours of the open country. They therefore separated themselves into a town. The act of incorporation itself is evidence of a certain minimum of town character. This gives the downward limit.

The Upward Limit. Five thousand population is taken as the upward limit because a good many American towns have approximated that size as supported exclusively by agriculture. In regions of average fertility and density of population a little town may easily grow to this extent simply as a rural centre; few grow beyond it, however, without the help of industry. Furthermore, five thousand town people will still keep within walking distance of a single common centre which constitutes the business and institutional focus of their lives. Beyond that number, population tends to seek outlying sub-centres and to want a street car service. These are the beginnings at least of urban tendencies. Five thousand population is thus a natural upward limit.

Elasticity of the Field. The essential import of the book, however, permits quite elastic limits in its field of discussion. If its scope were enlarged so as to include towns of eight thousand population with their two and three-quarter million additional people, most of the discussion still applies perfectly. If, on the other hand, the upward limit is reduced from five thousand to twenty-five hundred population, nine-tenths of the little towns of the nation are still included, with two-thirds of the population whose distinctive life is being studied. The field is therefore not dependent upon any particular arbitrary definition, but covers the broad median aspect of American life. The little town is distinguished not so much by the number of its population as by an attitude toward immediate environment and life in general which may be called the townsman's consciousness.

THE TOWNSMAN'S CONSCIOUSNESS

A Stubborn Human Factor. Two young women of a small county seat in the Middle West recently made their first visit to New York City. They recalled that twenty years ago, as children living in a railroad village of three hundred people, they visited a "city" of eight thousand and were introduced as coming from the "country." They felt wronged and humiliated then. They still feel that their feeling was right. In their hearts they believe that their home experience belongs rather with New York City than with the open country. This is the stubborn human factor lying at the root of every practical program for the little town. However unreasonable or even comical, it is to be reckoned with; for this reason it is worth examining in all its baldness.

Conscious Urban Affiliations. The citizen of Littleton is sure that he is different from and superior to the country-man: he feels that he is like, though inferior to, the city man; that he belongs to the urban rather than to the rural order of life. Challenged to defend his position, the townsman would think first of the palpable advantages of his lot. He walks on a sidewalk; he works less hard than the farmer; his day begins two hours later and he sits up two hours longer; he wears "good" clothes more of the time; he has better and nearer schools and churches.

Fundamental Urban Superiorities: 1. Specialization. Driven to deeper analysis he commonly ends by asserting three final superiorities, each deep rooted in human nature.

First, the advantage of the town over the country in social specialization and in the consequent honour of belonging with the few as contrasted with the many. The people of the open country have but one vocation, that of farming; the people of the town are divided between many vocations. Between themselves the farmers are equal and their work is similar. Except for the exchange of like services no man depends upon another in economic relations. To the townsman, however, whether the merchant, the skilled mechanic, or the professional man, the whole group of farmers comes to ask services different from those which any of their own number can render. Severally they may be far richer than the average townsman, but their mental attitude is that of inferiority. Their total group may be of more importance than his; but there are only half a dozen preachers or lawyers and only thirty or forty school teachers or merchants to every hundred farmers. In this abiding ratio lies the distinction of specialized service.

2. Sophistication. From the earliest dawn of social life it has been felt that the clash of wits, especially in the market place, sharpens them. The mind stagnates in isolation, is speeded up in association. The man whose business is trade has always felt keenly his sophistication and acumen in contrast with the slower movement of the rustic mind. The typical townsman still implicitly claims this advantage over the farmer.

3. Prerogative. The townsman feels his superiority as the keeper of the ideals of the community and of their peculiar symbols. He has—to paraphrase Prof. Galpin—not only its pantry and shop but also its safe,

its medicine chest, its playhouse and its altar. All keepers of ideals tend to hierarchical pride and a sense of class prerogative. It is hard to hold them to the humility of service.

Facing Away from the Country. The townsman universally asserts these superiorities as against the country population. The rural child attending the town school and the retired farmer moving to town to end his days, are made keenly aware of them. Their total result is that the little towns as a group tend to face away from the country in ambition and sympathy, and to envy and ape the city. They recognize the city as still more specialized in its occupations, more wise and witty, and more the shrine of ideals than they are. It is easy to show that this mental attitude is in utter contradiction to the main tendency of their economic relationships. All the main issues of their lives are bound up with those of the open country; and this the main stream of their thought and feeling ignores. For this they are universally scorned and scolded. It is agreed by nearly all serious thinkers that in the type of its schooling, in its church and religious life and in its social customs and motives the little town needs revolutionary redirection, that it needs to become rurally-minded. But neither scorning nor scolding really helps matters. The first step in redeeming the little town is to understand it; after that it may be converted. The roots of its self-consciousness must be utilized as well as modified.

INCORPORATION

Significance and Methods. Incorporation is the legal and formal act by which the little town declares its

physical and mental severance from the open country, and registers its sense of independent group-needs and values.[4] In most states this takes place under general legislation, after a petition of the inhabitants or a popular vote upon the proposed incorporation. Popular vote, however, is not always necessary, the initiative in some states proceeding from the county authorities, who may set off towns at their discretion. The law frequently requires a minimum number of inhabitants; but there is no uniformity on this point nor as to nomenclature. There are scores of full-fledged municipalities of less than one hundred population, and "city," in America, may mean anything from a few hundred population upward.

Powers of Incorporated Towns. In the theory of American government—handed down in this respect from mediaeval England—the powers of the little town are delegated to it by the state. The state ought, and in general does permit the people of an incorporated place to do the things which are collectively necessary for their closely knit community life. Those include adequate powers to provide fire and police protection, streets and sidewalks and means of their lighting at night, sewers and waterworks, and the like. One of the oldest rights of village and town is to make market regulations. This was of central importance in the Middle Ages, and even its emasculated modern residuum is still very close to the heart of every town officer who is also in trade, since it enables him to take legal toll of the farmer. Limited powers of taxation are necessary to carry out the functions catalogued above, including those

[4] Fairlie, "Local Government, p. 200 f.

of issuing bonds and of levying special assessments against property for public improvements.

DISASTROUS CLEAVAGE BETWEEN TOWN AND COUNTRY

Impressed with a consciousness of their group superiority over the open country, strongly convinced of the rightness of their own viewpoint and armed with such legal powers, these thousands of groups of Americans have set up their municipal housekeeping in a certain mood of division from, if not of opposition to, the farm population, the inner motive and complexity of which Prof. Galpin has analysed: "The banker, store keeper and blacksmith knows (the farmer) as the goose that lays the golden egg. The problem is one of pleasing (him) and getting his trade without building him and his mind, capacities, and wishes, into the community fabric. The farmer's money is good and necessary and must be obtained and his goodwill retained; but how to accomplish this object is a problem. Thorough-going incorporation of the farmer into the stream of village activities is frustrated by the fundamental conception of the self-sufficiency of the village. The farmer is presented outright with a few donations, as privileges in order to bind him. Toll, of course, is to be exacted by villagers somewhere. Graft sometimes takes the place of open dealing. The farmer does not share in the control and responsibility of certain things which he occasionally enjoys at the village as a spectator. The outlying farm population is seldom massed. Its members come to town by team or automobile or on foot or horseback, do their business without a resting place of their own, stand on other people's streets, in other people's shops, and

THE FARMER IN TOWN

He uses the town's streets and shipping facilities more than the townsman does, yet feels himself an alien and inferior there and is so regarded by the town population

over other people's counters. They go back after some hours of absence to their own lands, occupations, and homes. In the village they are aliens, but aliens with a possible title to be conciliated. The embarrassment is on both sides. The farmer pays in so much in trade he feels that he ought to have consideration; he pays so little directly toward the institutions that the village considers that his rights are not compelling. Puzzle, perplexity, and embarrassment, obscure the whole relationship and situation; and the universal process of legalized insulation of village and city away from the farm, which has grown up undisputed, with scarcely a hint of abnormality, is constantly shadowed by this overhanging cloud of doubt."[5] The final result of it all is one of the most conspicuous moral cleavages within the nation. Though far less recognized, it is as wide and deep as any class distinction, and is more extensive and massive than any race division. It is one of the major social facts.

THE ACTUAL LITTLE TOWN

When such people as we have described get together in human groups of from one or two hundred to five thousand in number under conditions of close neighbourhood, just what happens? In terms of concrete description what exactly is the little town, first to the casual eye, then to the curious and finally to interpreting mind?

Glimpsed in passing, the composite picture of the type cannot honestly be said to be pleasing. The setting of landscape and country-side activities differs with the physical features of the continent from east to west, and with latitude, from zone to zone; but it is rarely without

[5] University of Wisconsin Research Bulletin No. 34, p. 25 f.

charm. The town is the ugly accent in an endless panorama of interest and beauty.

In the Middle-West. Here its fields smile around it, but frequently the chief beauty spot is just outside its borders where the grave stones gleam under the green trees. The cemetery is almost always shaded and is usually better kept than the town. At the outskirts where the cultivated fields stop, come the pastures where the town's cows graze. Then begins the sight of unkempt premises, of barns, poultry yards, manure heaps, wood piles, and nondescript out-buildings which outnumber the dwellings. A careful score kept day after day over hundreds of miles in the agricultural South and Central West, convinces the author that there are seven outbuildings to one dwelling, each if possible more ugly and incongruous than the other. It is extremely rare to find home grounds in which the group of buildings is definitely planned. (The farther West has not yet had time to build so many out-buildings, and the South will leave things out in the open.) Towering over the town is the municipal water tank or stand pipe,—the most conspicuous object to the eye. At little extra cost each one of them might have been turned into a civic campanile. Visiting a great state institution, an architect was asked to designate the best designed structure. Unhesitatingly he replied, "The water tower." But the little town erects its water tower only as an expression of utilitarian ugliness or lack of charm.

Crumbs of Comfort. Frequently the most pleasing note is the drab and standardized orderliness of the railroad corporation, lumber yard and oil station. No

beauty is attempted, but things are at least not out of order as they are everywhere else in the little town. To be sure there is Main Street with its pretentious "White Way" wasting electricity from expensive cluster lights. But the street is muddy and littered; and most of the town has few street lights and no electricity in the houses. Around many of the houses stretch small lawns. A minority have gardens, or at least a few flowers; but the plantings are usually haphazard, and with no intelligent disposition of trees or shrubs. At best a certain comfortable primness characterizes the average individual dwelling.

Arrangement and Architecture. The public buildings consist chiefly of small wooden churches located at random throughout the village, and a public school building or two, usually dingy, with inadequate grounds. If the little town chances to be a county-seat there is the inevitable court house, either utterly nondescript in architecture, or new and pretentious. The location of the public buildings almost never shows definite plan or produces any impression of civic unity. Most of the small towns in America are bisected by a railroad along which much of the ugliness concentrates, and which frequently divides the town socially as well as geographically. On the other side of the track are the poorer homes, the muddier and weedier streets, and the fewer sidewalks. On the farther edge possibly, lie the town's one and two industrial plants—a flour mill or a tile works,—also the inevitable base ball field with its rudimentary bleachers. Hidden among the trees the receding little town becomes attractive. Its outer beauty de-

pends upon not looking too closely at the details. There are striking exceptions, but such is the best which can be said for the American little town as a whole.

An Actual Inventory. An informal survey of a typical little town in the North-West yields results like the following: There are about one hundred dwelling houses occupied by a total population of five hundred people. The service of this population and the surrounding farms involves about seventy-five enterprises other than domestic, expressed in institutions or business. Beside the school and three churches there are seven professional men maintaining offices, as well as a barber and a photographer to complete the roll of those who live by rendering personal services. Thirty businesses are concerned with providing food, clothing and shelter to the people of the community, and ten to transporting them and their products locally or to other parts. Seven enterprises deal chiefly with the physical needs of transients. Beside two hotels there are probably a superfluous number of lunch rooms chiefly catering to the farmer who comes to town to trade. There are five enterprises of finance and credit, including three banks. For amusement there are three pool halls, beside the public school playground with a minimum of apparatus, two privately-owned tennis courts and the "K. P." hall used for casual entertainments. For communication and information this little town has its post office, a small newspaper and a telephone exchange. There is a privately-owned electric light plant; while a fire department house is the only visible possession of municipal government. There are several miles of concrete sidewalk, for this is a young and enterprising com-

munity: but perhaps half of the houses proclaim their possession of individual water supply by the presence of wind mills. A rough estimate gives perhaps twenty-five mechanics about evenly divided between the building industries and the operation and repair of machinery.

Incomplete Civic Centres. This collection of homes, streets, institutions, businesses and other activities constitutes the outward aspect of the little town of five hundred to a thousand people. There is a group of still smaller little towns—comprising perhaps one half of the total number,—each having a population of less than five hundred; with an uncounted number of similar unincorporated villages. These are best described as incomplete civic centres. Typically they have church and graded school, a number of stores and facilities of shipping for the products of the region; but they are without high school or newspaper, and the immediately surrounding country population does most of its trading and much of its selling of products at the larger centres. The social problems of these communities are less complicated. They have more of the neighbourhood spirit and find it easier to blend village and country people in common projects than is the case with the larger communities. Their mental break with rural interests is perhaps less pronounced, but so far as present is even less excusable.

Beneath the Surface. The systematic study of any social unit is technically called a survey. Such a study of a typical town in a prosperous western state is popularly proclaimed as a "Social Photograph of Belleville." [6]

Belleville had an estimated population of 2367 peo-

[6] *Rural Manhood,* VI, p. 123 f., p. 168 f.

ple in 1913. Considerably over one-fourth of them have lived there over twenty years. They are the old timers, the settled and established portion of the community. Somewhat less than one-fourth have been resident less than two and one-half years. One may guess that the old ways mean less to many of them and that their minds are more hospitable to change. About one-tenth of the population is of foreign birth.

Occupation. One-third of the families live by business and the few professions represented in the little town; another third consists of retired farmers and their families; and finally a third are employés of the railroad, this being a division point with yards and repair shops. The presence of this third element in such large proportion makes the town unlike the majority of its class which are limited to the business and farming elements. Fourteen per cent. of the women of Belleville of twenty years of age and upward are gainfully employed.

Income. The weekly incomes of 270 families reported upon are distributed as follows:

Less than	$10.00 per week,	29%	below standard of comfort, 45%
	$10.–12 " "	16%	
	$13.–17 " "	9½%	above standard of comfort, 55%
	$18.–22 " "	12½%	
	$23.–27 " "	11%	
	$28.–40 " "	12%	
More than	$40.00 " "	10%	

The investigators find that an income of $650 to $700 per year is necessary to keep a Belleville family of five in comfort. This means an income of at least $13.00 per week, and forty-four per cent. of the inhabitants of the town have less than this. Seventy per cent. of the

single men over twenty years of age get less than $12.00 per week. In other words, a highly uncomfortable proportion of the people are in actual poverty and this in the midst of a splendidly developed county virtually every inch of which is cultivated, whose farm lands are worth nearly twice as much per acre as the average of the state and nation, and the value of whose crops alone would produce an income of $200 per year for every inhabitant. One may speculate as to the probable size of little-town incomes in poorer farming regions.

Consumption. How the people in the little town spend their money was studied by grouping the families into those receiving an average of $500, of $800 and of $1500 per year respectively. The results secured were those familiar to the student of family budgets. There can be less difference in the cost of food between the poorer and the richer, since all must have at least enough nourishment to live; but there is marked difference in the cost of housing and expenditures for heating, lighting and the comforts of the home; while with the poorest, money for education, for health, insurance, travel, recreation and benevolence, dwindles almost to the vanishing point.

Education. In spite of the difference of family income, all children go to school. Not only is this taken for granted, but the age at which the majority drop out to begin work is two to three years later than in the great cities, and fully half of the graduates of the high school go on to college.

Churches. With a population of twenty-three hundred people Belleville furnishes church sitting for fourteen hundred, has nine hundred and sixty-nine church

members and an average attendance at morning service of five hundred and twenty-seven. In this matter, a western sociologist has formulated an approximate "law" as follows: That in the average town there inclines to be half as many church sittings as the population and about half as many people in average attendance as there are sittings. Belleville roughly substantiates this generalization.

Charity. Twenty families were found to have been aided by public funds during the year, and twenty-five by private charity—chiefly that of the churches. Among these twenty-five cases of aid there were fifteen duplicators, showing that the town's right hand did not know what the left hand was doing and that charity in general was on a thoroughly unsystematic basis.

Play and Social Life. The study of recreation showed nine types of customary gatherings for social amusement and edification; with annual patronage as follows:

Moving pictures	105,000	Church socials and picnics	8,696
Church services	93,600	Lodges	8,692
Pool and billiard games	9,000	The Chautauqua	5,600
Agricultural fairs and farmers' meetings	12,400	Base ball	2,870
		Public dances	2,300

That the "movies" lead numerically, whereas ten years ago they were not existent, is of course evidence of the immense revolution which they have wrought in the field of cheap amusement. Going to church has a slight lead over pool and billiards in the recreational

scale. It is especially interesting that the Chautauqua is just twice as popular as base ball, which raises the question of what really is the great American game in the corn belt. In spite of this considerable range of recreational opportunity, the investigators find a real play problem especially for children. Boys and girls "don't know what to do with themselves" a good deal of the time, especially on Sundays. They are kept off the public school playground after the close of school for lack of supervision. This situation is reported as usual throughout the state.

Health and Mortality. In the meagre character of its records on these points, Belleville matches the large majority of smaller American communities. The most that can be proved is that its death rate is more or less than that of the state in a given year. Unlike most similarly located communities, it gets its water from deep wells, and the cases of polluted water supply discovered by sanitary inspectors are reported as "few," —to be accurate, nineteen per cent. only. A physical examination of Belleville school children disclosed the amazing array of defects and ailments everywhere discovered and almost everywhere forgotten. That its children are above average *in size* gives this community evident pride.

Such is Belleville; such are thousands of other American little towns. Around this average they vary slightly to the one side or the other, and play for weal or woe their twelve thousand parts in American life.

II

THE TOWN'S RELATIONSHIPS AND PROSPECTS

THE DISTRIBUTION OF LITTLE TOWNS

A town or city of any size or degree is the place where the plasm of social life thickens like the yolk of the egg. It is a natural centre of civilization with respect to the less definitely organized surrounding country. In this character one of the most pertinent questions which can be asked about it is, "How far is it to the next town?" which means, "How large is the area over which the particular town has primary influence, and how many accessible rivals has it?" What also is the actual degree of their frequency in any given area, and does it follow any law?

Distribution of Larger Centres. On this point a most interesting method of taking a cross-section of American life is to ride across the continent on slow trains say from Boston to Seattle, and back from Los Angeles to Washington by a southern route, measuring the varying frequency of towns from section to section. The Census has already recorded the facts for the larger centres. From Boston to Albany, for example, there is a town or city of more than twenty-five hundred population every fourteen miles; thence to Buffalo one every fifteen miles. From Buffalo to the Mississippi River they were twenty-three miles apart; and beyond the Mississippi to the

mountains about twice as far. One travels over one hundred miles in the mountain states before he reaches such a town, and it is another hundred miles to the next. Up and down the Pacific Coast they are fifty-seven miles apart, and perhaps two or three hundred miles apart in the Southwestern district. From Texas east, they gain again in frequency to one in fifty-one miles, and to one in forty or so across the older South.

Varies as Density of Population. This is just what one would expect. The distribution of larger towns varies as density of population. When places large enough to be of more than local significance are considered, a good many people will be found to have a good many towns; a few people in an equal area will have a few such towns, each with a wide field of service. They will not occur in exact proportion to population, since even the scantiest population must have some major centres and the thickest could not have proportionately as many more without their treading one upon another. After there get to be, say, one hundred people to the square mile, towns will grow not more numerous but simply larger. They are already so close together that more people do not mean the multiplication of new places, but only the growth of old ones. On the other hand, in regions of three or five people to the square mile, if towns were proportionately as few as the population is sparse they would be virtually of no use at all. Civilization demands a certain number of urban distributing points, both of goods and of culture. Not precisely then, yet on the whole with striking fidelity, the occurrence of larger towns corresponds to density of population.

Why is the Little Town? The gaps between larger

centres vary as has been shown, from fifteen to one hundred, and even two or three hundred miles in distance. They are occupied by a filling of still smaller towns and open country; that is by alternating thickenings up and thinnings out of social relationships. But these groupings of population bear almost no relation to density. Such a concrete experiment as counting the miles or timing the stops of the local trains between stations in various sections of the country would discover unexpected variations. Why is the little town plentiful here and rare there? There seem to be three major reasons to account for it: agricultural prosperity, physiography, and habit.

1. The Little Town a Rural Luxury. In general the answer is simple: the distribution of little towns varies as agricultural prosperity. Where the price of land is highest and there is the largest proportion of improved land, where the value of farm product per acre and of farm improvement is greatest, there the little towns are thickest. Where the reverse is true they are fewest. The frequent little town thus appears as a sort of luxury of prosperous country people, whereas the larger ones come more nearly being the necessity of equally dense populations whatever their degree of prosperity is. Frequent little towns are the rich farmer's convenience; or to turn it around, rich farmers are the field of exploitation for many little towns. All countrymen support about as many little towns as they can. They must be very poor indeed to go without. This is the largest single factor in determining the town's frequency.

Sectional Variations in Frequency. The illustration of this principle from section to section is extremely impressive. In the South, Georgia excepted, it takes farm populations of from four thousand to eight thousand to support one little town, while in the Northern states, bordering on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, there is a little town for every twelve hundred and fifty or twenty-five hundred country people. States with approximately equal rural populations show the following glaring contrasts in number of little towns:

Illinois	993	Mississippi	325
Iowa	811	Louisiana	161

Rural prosperity is the most outstanding ground of these differences.

2. Physiography. Minor factors, however, enter into the distribution of little towns. Physiography is one of them. It accounts for the most striking sectional differences in America through our entire history. The prevalence of mountains and water powers urbanized New England from early times, while the spreading coastal plains invited the South to extensive agriculture, with the plantation instead of the town unit of social organization. Similar contrasts occur in immediately neighbouring states or within the bounds of single states. North Carolina, for example, with less than one-third more of rural population, has nearly twice as many little towns as South Carolina. Its greater Piedmont and mountain area early turned the population of the one state to small farming and domestic manufacture, in-

volving compact settlements; while nearly the entire area of the other was soil congenial to the plantation system. The combination of mountains and little rainfall, as in the West, intensifies the need of towns. Agriculture is confined to limited areas under such conditions and is dependent upon irrigation. Irrigation typically divides the cultivated land into small holdings and permits town and farm life to become almost synonymous. The American example of largest scale is, of course, Utah, which under the combined impulse of physiography and a common religion has developed into the most characteristically "rurban" state of the Union. "The plan of settlement in Utah brought the people together in compact communities. Agriculture was virtually the only industry which the settlers could follow. As irrigation was indispensable to agriculture, each family could care for only a small tract of land. Securing streams of water for this tract of land was often a matter of co-operative enterprise—the work not for one family but for many who could share the streams of water led from the rivers and creeks by co-operative enterprise. This need of co-operative effort applied to practically all the undertakings of pioneer life—road making, church and schoolhouse building, home building, mercantile industry. Life in town groups made this needful co-operative effort the more easy and natural and was determined by this needful co-operation. Life in town, moreover, secured mutual protection from the Indians. More important still it made possible of realization the general desire of the people to come together often in social and religious gatherings. For this privilege they were in large part settlers in this new land.

In these compact communities social conditions in a number of essential respects differed from social conditions commonly found elsewhere. Outside of what soon became the largest centres there developed a population neither rural nor urban, yet somewhat like both. The people were of one religious faith. Their hopes and desires, their aims and purposes were alike.''[1]

The ''rurban'' characteristics of irrigated regions have been quickly adopted by ''boomers'' as bait to attract settlers, as witness the following advertisement: ''This is no backwoods country. No primitive pioneering is necessary. The same advantages found in the more thickly populated sections are at the command of the settler.''

3. Habit. Another factor influencing the frequency of towns is habit. In the settlement of the newer West, populations emigrating from sections which had few towns did not establish as many as those which had always been accustomed to towns and took them for granted. Thus, Ohio and Indiana, with Missouri and Kansas, are strikingly below their neighbouring states to the west and north, in the number of their little towns for each thousand rural population, while they much more nearly equal them in rural prosperity. The former states were settled more largely by immigrants from the rural South; the latter by those from New England.[2] Nebraska and the Dakotas have nearly as many little towns relative to population as have Illinois and Iowa, though they cannot nearly so well afford them. Their people carried the town habit as they moved West. In

[1] Matheson, *Utah Educational Review*, VIII, p. 6.
[2] Turner, "Rise of the New West," p. 76 f.

proportion to his wealth the farmer of these states is carrying more little towns on his back than any other human being ever did. The explanation of their frequency is psychological rather than economic.

CONDITIONS OF MULTIPLICATION

The forces which in the past have determined the distribution of little towns are not exactly those which determine their present rate of increase in the various sections. There seem to be four situations in which new towns now tend to spring up.

1. With General Increase of Population. Except Oklahoma, the states which gained more than fifty per cent. in population between 1900 and 1910 were all in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast sections. Their gain in the growth of little towns is the largest of the nation, averaging from one hundred to two hundred per cent.

2. In the Neighbourhood of Great Urban Growth. While in the East generally there are few new towns being established, their rate of increase in New Jersey, for example, has equalled that of the average Middle Western state, but is entirely in suburban districts contiguous to New York and Philadelphia.

3. In the Wake of Progress. New towns, though increasing less rapidly, are still notably frequent where, with only moderate general growth in population, there is an awakening of intelligence and a marked growth in wealth. This largely explains the little-town growth of the South, where small places have been incorporated by the hundred in the last twenty years.

4. Where Prosperity Outruns Population. In spite of the stationary character—and even the decrease of its

rural population—the Middle-West has multiplied little towns by twenty-five per cent. in the last ten years. The loss of people is overborne by the increase of wealth. The first escape of rural prosperity is into little-town forms. This explains the marked addition of their numbers.

The East an Exception. The multiplication of little towns is going on with notable uniformity throughout most of the states. The East, however, has largely completed its town building process. Except in the immediate vicinity of great cities there are already about all the towns there are going to be. There are no surprising changes in general social outlook and no miraculous rises in land values to accelerate their growth. With growth of population, they seem to become larger rather than more numerous.

INFLUENCES DETERMINING INCORPORATION

A still different set of factors determines incorporation. It is one thing for people to live together in a thickly settled community and another to acquire legal status as a town. With large town communities, of course (except in New England), incorporation may be taken for granted; but with the town of five hundred people or less (and perhaps one-half of the entire group of twelve thousand belong to this class), the likelihood of incorporation depends very much upon the section in which it is located, or rather upon the differences in local government which characterize the sections.

1. New England. Local government elsewhere in America was devised to meet the cases of thinly settled open country. Incorporation reflects the inadequacy of

such government for the needs of town centres. There is no machinery with which to do what towns feel the need of doing except by separate incorporation. With New England it has been otherwise. From the beginning she yoked governmentally the fortunes of village-centre and out-lying farm land. Local government took good and equal care of the need of both aspects of the community. This section naturally, therefore, shows least tendency to separate incorporation. Town and township are synonymous, and only to a very limited extent has the latter-day growth of industrial towns with other fortunes than those of the open country, led them to seek separate corporate life. The conditions which have chiefly impelled incorporation in the rest of the nation, have not been present.

2. The South. This section, on the contrary, being from the first sparsely settled and predominantly rural, has developed no effective unit of local government smaller than the county. The little centres, as they have grown up, have found no near-at-hand civil agency meeting many of their needs. What could they do except to seek incorporation? Much that the township has done for most of the nation must be accomplished through the incorporated towns in this section. Stimulated by such incentive, incorporation is proceeding rapidly here; also smaller places are likely to become incorporated than is the average in other sections. Naturally, too, unusual prestige has attached to the country town which has largely monopolized such civic machinery as the section afforded.

3. The Middle-West. Local government here has been less adequate for massed populations than that of

New England, but more adequate than that of the South. Rural prosperity has allowed this section to afford a superfluity of little towns and it has proceeded to incorporate them with rapidity, from pride as well as from sense of needing more adequate governmental machinery.

4. Pacific and Mountain States. All the factors which stimulate incorporation in other sections combine here with peculiar urgency. Like the South, these states have not developed the township form of local government. Consequently incorporation is the only civic resource open to the local community. Again, these states have an extremely sparse population, which hinders effective rural organization and throws the major burdens of civilization upon towns. They are, relatively speaking, the rapidly growing sections of the nation, in which, naturally, new centres are springing up. Finally the dependence of agriculture upon irrigation, as has been shown, tends to unite towns and farms. Such a condition is most general in this group of states; the West therefore shows the most rapid rate of incorporation. The little towns which constitute but thirteen per cent. of the population of the nation at large, approximate thirty per cent. in Utah, Idaho and Wyoming. Wherever rural population is forbidden from scattering over the land and is concentrated in small areas, the dominance of the town bids fair permanently to change the caste of civilization, and to force local government for the open country to discover radically new forms.

THE LITTLE TOWN TYPE OF CIVILIZATION

Conditions of Town Influence. Shifting the question now from the distribution of towns and their tendency

to incorporation, to that of the relative influence of the little towns as a group, and of their human type, in the civilization of the various sections; it is the Middle-West which stands clearly pre-eminent. The influence of such a type gets its greatest chance not by virtue of the population of the towns themselves, but by virtue of such population plus that over which they have leadership. The maximum influence is not found where there is little or no rural population for the town to lead; nor where there are great and commanding cities to steal its prestige; but rather where it is the central organizing principle and social device of a relatively heavy and highly prosperous rural population, without extreme urban competition for power and leadership. These conditions are most completely met over the natural prairies of the Middle-West where the little-town's people approximate one-fourth of the total population, and dominate the life of at least a half more. Iowa and New York, roughly speaking, have an equal number of people in their little towns (some six hundred thousand each); but there are twice as many little towns in Iowa as New York has, and in New York they include but one-eighteenth of the total population. Manifestly, then, the little town is much more influential relatively in Iowa than in New York. Its outlook and characteristic thought have a larger weight in directing the destinies of the state.

A Determining Factor in Civilization. From this standpoint the East is urban, the South rural, and the farther West composed of cities and little towns without a continuous agricultural basis. It is Iowa, Minnesota, the Dakotas, Kansas and Nebraska, and the rural counties of Illinois and Missouri, with parts of Indiana, Michi-

gan and Wisconsin, which constitute the pre-eminent little-town area of the United States. Any adequate social view of the nation must recognize this as a determining characteristic of a definite type of civilization. In contrast with over-lapping series of metropolitan areas, as in the Northeast, or the occasional occurrence of town and city in the midst of waste and empty "hinterland," as in the far West, the close neighbourhood of towns—most of them small—with over-lapping service-areas covering together the entire surface of the land, furnishes still one of the typical conditions of American life. Here most fruitfully, within the next decade, the great experiment of reorganizing rural life around its natural centres will be tried out.

ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION OF TOWNS

General Dependence upon Agriculture. Up to this point the discussion has been treating the little town as essentially a social phenomenon attached to rural life; as created by, dependent upon and serving the country. It is true that the vast majority of all towns are thus created and supported: but it is necessary to note certain exceptions. Not all towns originate by the thickening-up of rural life at certain spots.

Urban Overflows. Sometimes the city turns around upon the land. Having become over-large, it spills over into town forms again. Thus one finds the suburbs—residential and manufacturing; the resort and amusement towns surrounding the city within week-end distance. These constitute a satellite type of collective life. Every metropolis has a group of surrounding dependent cities and between them less concentrated popu-

lations. These less concentrated populations are imposed upon old town or township areas. Many of them still remain towns in form and in law, but not in dominant character. They cease, for example, to be trade centres for their own surrounding country. Farm produce is first shipped to the larger city and then sold back to them at two profits.

Town Form—City Fact. The New York metropolitan area shows dozens of examples of these pseudo-towns. One is just over the river from a manufacturing city. The factories which dominate it do not want to pay city taxes. Probably they prefer to have a "free hand" in labour troubles rather than to deal with a developed industrial consciousness of a modern city. Consequently they maintain their own fire departments and supplement the village constable with the hired watchman. In case of strike they ignore the town police and call in professional strike-breakers as deputies. The old village population submits, through inertia and a willingness to let corporations pay their taxes. Calling this a town in the census reports does not make it so. It is simply the spill-over of a distinctively urban situation into an area not yet organized into proper urban forms.

County Form—City Fact. The urban spirit creates pseudo-country as well as pseudo-towns. A queer combination of transplanted New England tradition and urban snobbery explains the existence of some of the largest unincorporated places of America on Long Island near New York. Rather than make common cause with poorer neighbours, the ultra-rich refuse the obvious benefits of incorporation. Police and fire protection are largely in private hands. Only sanitation triumphs over

selfishness and compels organization of sewer districts.

Metropolitan Areas. Recognizing such facts, the last Census studied the metropolitan areas surrounding most of the larger cities. Within these areas, whatever the civil designation or the legal status of a given area, life is essentially urban, reflecting the city or its immediate reactions—such as the residential suburb is. Thus the metropolitan area around Albany, New York, includes about fifty thousand people living under what may be classified as rural or small-town conditions, but all fundamentally affected by the proximity and accessibility of the city which robs all the other units of their original character.

Towns Created by the Primary Industries. An interesting variation in towns is presented by those which grow up as centres of the mining or lumbering industries. They are true towns in many of their characteristics. They are supported by their respective primary industries which occupy a surrounding area, just as the farm centre is supported by the outlying farm lands. They have perhaps half their populations working in small groups in comparative isolation from the centre. These outlying populations use the centre as their economic and ideal focus just as the farmer uses the town. On the other hand mining and lumbering differ from agriculture in that they cannot be permanent on a given area. When they have robbed it of its first values they are done with the land for ever. The towns which they create, therefore, are likely to be transient, lasting only so long as the limited raw material of the industry, and disappearing when it is exhausted. While they last, as Professor Carver has shown, they follow the law of the

city as to population, rather than that of the typical town.

Manufacturing Towns. Beside the thickly populated metropolitan areas immediately surrounding the larger cities, larger forms of concentration are to be noted. These are mapped and studied by commercial geography. One-half of the population of the United States is massed in the northeastern one-sixth of its area. Most of the manufacturing is done here and the rest is confined to quite definite and relatively small regions which remain strikingly permanent. Within these areas exist many little centres of population—towns in size and in major characteristics—which do not depend chiefly upon agriculture for their living. They are in the country but not of it. These manufacturing towns in a rural setting must be recognized as a permanent and special problem. Often they have large natural but forgotten alliances with the country. Frequently their material betterment is easy under the benevolent despotism of the corporation which owns them, while from the standpoint of genuine civic virtue and democratic progress they are of all towns most miserable.

Railroad Towns. Created by the location of the repair shop or division station, they have many characteristics common with this last type. They are arbitrarily distributed over the area of the nation by the necessities of another type of economic activity than farming; they are thrust into the open country. Here is a railroad town in the arid South-West. Absolutely nothing is produced by the country for miles around, and not a carload of material has ever been shipped

out; yet here are hotel, stores, amusements and transportation agencies, homes and even churches; all bearing no more relation to the area in which they are located than a Bedouin camp with its camels resting in the desert.

A Mixed Type. It is clear that there is radical economic difference between the agricultural town, dependent upon and serving only its immediate farming area, and the urban and industrial town existing for all the world and sending its products everywhere. So great a difference might almost exclude the latter group from any common classification with the former, except for the existence of a large number of towns of a very mixed type, where industry has merely permanently superimposed upon agriculture, modifying without overthrowing its distinctive ways. These are the common denominator of the little-town group. Their problem links them essentially with both extremes. Here, however, urban activities generally induce at last embryonic urban conditions, such as the presence of foreign population, with acute class-consciousness, and probably special problems of housing, recreation, education and religion. Such towns are towns and more; they must drive together and abreast all elements and aspects of rural and urban reconstruction.

Proportions of Various Classes. No one knows exactly how many towns there are in any of the above classes, nor even their vague proportions, the facts being ungathered or buried in untabulated data of the Census Bureau. But the vast majority of the little towns of the nation still depend upon agriculture and

the businesses growing directly from agriculture. The relatively few which do not, belong, as has been shown, rather to the urban sphere.

County Seats and School Towns. Within the dominant type itself interesting sub-orders appear,—as when the function of local government or of ideal leadership lifts itself above the market function. The first case is conspicuously that of the county-seat. The history of its bad and good, its oscillation between exploitation and real leadership, might well become a chapter of itself. Of the second type the little school-town is the most conspicuous example. Growing up with the academy or small college, it has taken on a distinctive life, often to the sad neglect of the specific interests of the near-by open country. But American civilization is for ever the debtor to this little Athens and its type. They were the earliest environment of higher education and still furnish homes to the majority of our colleges. These more than any other type or variety of places have brought the full range of American opportunities near to the rural boy and girl, and have given the nation the majority of its leaders. They exemplify the little town at its best.

THE TOWN'S PROSPECTS

Imbedded thus in the structure of the American nation, confined between their mightier neighbours, urban and rural, and with such inner differences as have been described, what are the prospects of the little towns as a group? What chance have they of growth and large prosperity? [3]

[3] Vogt, "Rural Sociology," p. 358.

Scant Prospects of Becoming Cities. The State of Kansas has for its motto, "Ad astra per aspera." According to a local wit this means; "Property will be higher in the spring." The expectation of rapid growth through the coming of the people from somewhere else, has been justified for the American nation as a whole, as, state by state, it has possessed the continent from east to west. It has therefore been successively the expectation of each minor division; and especially is it the familiar spirit of the little towns. The possibility to which half of them at least are giving most devoted attention, is that of becoming a city; and this in most cases is an impossibility.

"Chicago, Arizona," or "Baltimore, Oklahoma," or "Boston, Wyoming"! The presumptuous spectacle presented by such towns is keenly satirized by Professor Frank A. Waugh. "They are like old maids, forsaken by opportunity but still simpering and smiling as though commanding a fecund future. The Western states are especially burdened with such still-born metropoli. Every cross roads is going to become a county seat; every county seat aspires to be the state capital. Meanwhile no town has the inspiration and dignity to be itself. . . . In ninety-nine villages and towns out of every hundred throughout the United States—more especially in the South and West—the first work of community improvement lies in killing the poison of a false ambition and establishing a patriotic self-respect."[4] In other words, the little towns except in rare instances—are not going to become cities. They might as well make virtue of necessity and graciously accept their

[4] Waugh, "Rural Improvement," p. 161.

limitations, as one learns to accept any of life's inevitables.

Limited Prospects Even With Exceptional Advantages. This judgment is confirmed by a study of county-seat towns in representative states of each section. As a group, county-seats are more evenly distributed geographically than any other group of towns which can be selected; and they must represent something more than an average of town success or they would never have become county-seats. As a group therefore, their prospects should be distinctly better than those of the towns as a whole.

The East. New Jersey is typical of the Atlantic seaboard. A small state between two great cities, its recent little-town growth is almost exclusively a spilling-over of urban life into suburbs—residential, resort and manufacturing. All these populations are really mobilized by the city. They may be in the towns; they are not of them. Apart from these by-products of urban growth, there is no movement toward the little towns in New Jersey. In the rural counties their populations are either stationary or declining.

The South. Until recently this section has been excessively rural. It is now experiencing simply normal urban growth, which naturally includes a fair measure of growth in the little towns. Their average increase, however, is anything but striking. In Alabama for example, one-sixth of the county-seats lost population in the decade previous to 1910.

The Middle-West. The North-Central States furnish the most disillusionizing data concerning little-town prospects. These have the largest proportion of little

towns and in their life the town factor is most influential. Most of their county-seats have less than five thousand population, and far more of these lost than gained population in the decade under consideration. Thus in Michigan, twenty-six declined or were stationary to nineteen which gained; in Illinois thirty-five to thirty which gained. Iowa's case is the worst: of seventy-five county-seats of the little-town class, eighteen were stationary and thirty-eight lost; that is, two-thirds of them saw the prospect of becoming a city definitely receding.

Selling Lots in Anamosa. A New Yorker who inherited Iowa town property spends his days wondering why he cannot sell his lots in Anamosa. The answer should be fairly obvious: nobody is selling lots in Anamosa; nor in seven thousand other like places in the nine states stretching from New York and Pennsylvania to Missouri and Iowa.[6] These seven thousand towns had fewer people in them in 1910 than they had ten years before. They constitute well over a half of the little towns of the nation: they justify the presumption (nobody has actually counted) that probably two-thirds of the total number are without justifiable hope of numerical increase. No wonder the bond buyer looks askance at their municipal securities. Four states of this group reported loss of rural population in the last Census decade: Ohio, Indiana, Iowa and Missouri.

But "rural," in the statistical sense, includes all towns of twenty-five hundred population or less. The actual loss of population in these states was largely in the little towns.

[6] See Gillen, "Community Development and the State University," in *Town Development*, XII, p. 99.

Mountain and Pacific States. The regions of little rainfall, if populated at all, must become so by means of irrigation; which ordinarily means the cultivation of land in small tracts, and the grouping of populations in towns. The Mountain and Pacific Coast states, therefore, reveal the little towns as a group enjoying rapid growth. This condition is, however, by no means uniform or invariable. All the older areas of this region are already subject to the same tendencies as prevail in the rest of the country. One-third of Colorado's county-seats of the little-town class lost population—some of them strikingly—between 1900–10. Country towns in the earlier-settled valleys of California and Oregon tell the same tale.

Competition within the Class. And even where the little town is growing there is no reason to suppose that individual places will continue to grow. Unborn rivals will spring up, as they have been doing everywhere in older sections during the last Census decade. Virtually one-sixth of all the little towns of America—over two thousand in all—came into being during that period. At the same time, the growth of rural population was greatly checked and the larger cities took mighty strides. The little-town group has indeed equalled the second-class cities in growth and surpassed the smaller cities; but almost everywhere the individual town has experienced greatly sharpened competition.

Competition of the City. From the standpoint of numerical growth, then, the prospects of the little town are far from bright. Beside the fact of competition within its class, there are two farther reasons for this: first, of course, the competition of the city. This is not

so obvious nor irritating as that of the town's immediately rival neighbours; but it is equally fundamental. The city's tentacles are for ever lengthening to rob the little town of its very life,—namely, its trade. Mail-order houses sell directly to the farmer by the million dollars' worth of goods. Parcels-post facilitates the process, aided and abetted by the rural free delivery. The good roads movement, as planned chiefly by and for the cities, tends to regard the little towns as incidental. The machinery of civilization, in brief, gravitates into the hands of their over-grown rivals. Prestige runs in the same channel; the lure of the city conquers the little-townsman first, because he cherishes incipient contempt for his own sphere of life. His ampler ambitions already lie in an urban direction.

Limits Set by Extensive Agriculture. And quite apart from the acute competition of other little towns and of the great city, economic forces set straight limits to the growth of little towns under any system of extensive agriculture. Disguised and forgotten so long as the nation had an abundance of free land which was being rapidly occupied, these forces nevertheless operate relentlessly; they force themselves upon attention especially now that our good land is substantially all pre-empted. Their operation is traced by the economist as follows: agricultural populations tend to spread out thinly upon the land so long as there is any open land of similar quality elsewhere to which migration may go. There is yet fertile land in the temperate portions of the globe; for example, in Canada. The Western farmer therefore migrates to Canada. He might have divided his farm between his boys; he does

not do so because extensive farming yields more valuable product per worker—and hence a larger reward—than intensive farming. Agriculture could easily work a smaller unit of land more thoroughly and thus support more people per square mile. But there is no temptation to do it so long as it means merely that each worker involved would work harder for no greater reward. We do not find, therefore, and are not to look in any near future, for substantial increase of rural population in the older states. But little-town population cannot possibly grow faster than rural population. Except in the small minority of cases where it depends upon manufacturing, it has no function save to serve the country as a centre for trade and ideals. City growth follows another law: it is as rapid and as limitless as the multiplication of human desires. The country is growing, normally perhaps; but slowly, as it must. There is absolutely nothing that the little towns as a group can do to hasten their independent growth. If therefore, their number largely increases, as it is doing, many of them cannot grow at all; and many must actually lose in population. This corresponds with the facts, and reveals the little town's handicap as fundamental and permanent,—at least until we enter upon some radically different system of agricultural economy. Nothing can make it grow except to get more people upon the land, and this is not generally in prospect in any of the well-settled regions of the country. The other conceivable alternative—namely, to get manufacturing generally diffused—flies in the face of the equally stubborn fact that manufacturing, for strong and persistent reasons, tends to concentrate.

Self-Discipline. Nothing sane can be done by the little towns till they conform their spirits to this prospect of narrowly limited growth. This is at total outs with their characteristic mood of booming bumptiousness. They were projected as rivals of Chicago or Seattle. Their streets are too wide and therefore full of weeds; their "Grand Hotel" is too big and therefore moulders in decrepitude; their churches are too many and therefore starve out a miserable career of rivalry; their stores also are too many,—but fortunately rival stores are not kept alive by denomination subsidies. Rows of unoccupied store buildings however, complete the picture of mal-adjustment to actual possibilities.

To the little towns of America therefore, one scripture comes with peculiar force and aptness; that which counsels against thinking of oneself "more highly than he ought to think," and which exhorts, "So to think as to think soberly." This does not preclude a temperate enthusiasm which has a right to become exuberant whenever it finds good cause in a given case, and which does find good cause generally in the consideration of the fairer possibilities of the little town as a little town. Within the limits of its typical character —not in the futile attempt to escape from it—many of the better destinies of America are to be shaped.

III

THE TOWN'S COUNTRY

THE ARTIFICIAL DIVIDING OF A CONTINENT

George Washington was a farmer and a surveyor. To these two characters his title as Father of his Country is more justly due than to political wisdom or military exploits. The farmer and the surveyor stretched forth their rod over our whole land: we received a continent from them. The surveyor conceived it for the convenience and potential occupancy of the farmer as consisting of so many rectangles, larger or smaller (sections, half-sections, quarter-sections, and their small subdivision), to be divided from one another by clear and explicit boundary lines. It is recognized that our system of land surveying was one of the greatest of American social inventions; an immeasurable aid to the actual settlement of the continent by the farm owners on small holdings; the mechanical expression of the deep instinct which made America a nation of homes. In this interest, a remarkable and far-sighted policy cut up the entire continent back from the Atlantic seaboard.[1] Politically, it covered most of this area by townships, usually six miles square. Physical features were generally ignored, and social considerations were ordinarily not even considered in creating these basal civil units. Even the counties generally became rec-

[1] Carver, "Principles of Rural Economics," p. 74.

tangular areas, showing nothing informing as to social structure within, nor as to larger social relationships. In short the land was divided artificially and geometrically; its local units did not recognize the natural political and social areas, nor show the actual working relationships and human groupings of the people who occupied it.

"RURBANISM": THE TOWN THE COUNTRY'S CAPITAL

Natural Social Units. When one starts out to trace the actual social structure of the smaller units of population, namely neighbourhoods and primary communities, —he discovers facts in greatest possible contrast to a geometrical scheme. The continent, as viewed by social analysis, is covered by a more or less over-lapping series of city- and town-centres, each with a dependent and supporting rural area. Any fundamental social viewpoint must concern itself with these natural areas, and the forces which create them, which organize their inner life, set their limits and determine their relationships. A social judgment of America cannot be written in terms of existing civil-government units.

The Rural Regions Organized Around Centres. To challenge definite and adequate attention to the existence of natural social units and especially to signify the organization of the rural regions around small centres, the social students of the University of Wisconsin have coined the term "rurbanism." A "rurban" community consists of the village or town-centre with its surrounding farm population which uses the centre as its economic and ideal focus. Such a community always occupies a relatively definite area which can be outlined

and charted. Its limits are not the hard and fast limits of town or county lines as fixed by law. They are as fluctuating as human purposes, yet they maintain substantial permanence through long series of years. Prof. Charles J. Galpin calls attention to the fact that "the farm families making up the trade population of the same centre are more closely related to each other than to any other group of farmers; and more closely related to the population of their centre than to that of any other centre, or even to any other group."[2] If this is true we ought not to think of homogeneous rural populations in general contrast with town populations; for each particular farming community has larger identification with the town people at its centre than with the farmer of the next community. It is these other farmers who are alien—not the people of his own town in whose streets the farmer walks daily, and whose economic and moral fortunes are common with his.

A Human Definition of a Little Town. Adopting this viewpoint, a Wisconsin educator offers the following as the working social attitude of his community: "Sauk City has a population of nine hundred people. The business men of our village have a human definition of Sauk City. The articles of incorporation confine us to a small portion of this earth at the bend of the Wisconsin River consisting of about 120 acres. The community which the business men recognize as Sauk City sweeps out into the country for miles about the village, including everybody that has a common interest with us."[3]

[2] "Rural Relations of the Village or Small City," Wisconsin Bulletin No. 711, p. 37.

[3] Wisconsin Bulletin No. 711, p. 42.

The Little Town's Imperialism. The opening chapter of this book has already discussed some of the characteristics of the little town as a natural centre, and asserted that its chief function is that of rural leadership; it now remains to present the detailed evidence for these earlier assumptions. The evidence actually warrants far more than has been claimed. Instead of the modest statistical identification of the little-town problem with the fortunes of the twelve million or so people who live in incorporated places of five thousand or less, the philosophy of "rurbanism" implies that most of the problems of rural life are to be solved through the development of little-town centres and the utilization of their vital relationships with the open country. The little town has its imperialism as well as its modesty; in its keeping are the destinies of half the nation.

FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. The Little Town the Primary Trade Centre. This is its first fundamental characteristic. The town's country is the area which trades with it; which makes common cause with it in buying and selling, in credit and transportation facilities. Its typical functionaries are the retail merchant, the middleman—who takes the farmer's produce and turns it over to the city for consumption—the banker, the post-master and the railway and express agents.

2. The Little Town a Centre of Ideals. The town's country is the area which comes to it for play, education and worship. Here are the country's moving pictures, its baseball diamonds, and its Chautauquas. The

country's high schools are ordinarily here, and most of its ministers of religion live here,—though many of them would do better in immediate neighbourhood to the farmer whose religious life they interpret. Here, though the farmer may not directly share in them, are those social groups and activities which he imitates and envies. The little town is his school of fashion and of social propriety. Most of the voluntary social organizations to which he may belong, centre here.

3. The Little Town a Concentrated Neighbourhood. It may fairly be called the residuary possessor of neighbourliness, which primitively belongs to the whole community. Neighbourhood is a narrower term than community; it stands for a closer set of relationships. But, as concerns the town and the country, the distinction is largely the result of arbitrary forces,—particularly of the artificial physical basis of the farm community in America. The rectangular boundaries of its farm holdings; the consequent relations of the farm homes to one another; the geometrical pattern of its roads and means of communication all tend to make neighbourhood difficult in the open country. Here isolation rules. The primitive social arrangements of our English forefathers on the contrary, avoided such division between town and country. There were few centres in which the people did not immediately live by agriculture, and no farms which were remote from the centre. Thus in the typical manor, the cultivated land was divided into narrow plough-strips, assigned to families in rotation. Each plough-strip centred in the village; the end of every other furrow brought the farmer back into the thick of community life. Neighbourhood and agricul-

ture were synonymous. The gulf of feeling between the townsman and the farmer could not exist.

The Terrible Loss of Neighbourliness. The American continent theoretically might have been divided in a similar way,—as it virtually was in many New England villages. Their farm holdings were relatively small, stretching back in narrow fields from a street on which all the houses fronted. Neighbourhood was not at war with agriculture; the distinctive quality of New England life grows largely out of this fact. But throughout most of the nation, extensive farming and the surveyor's section lines divorced agriculture from neighbourhood, decreeing isolation for the average farmer, and preserving the more definite experiences of neighbourhood only to the closely built-up town centre. Under pioneer arrangements, the economic independence of the single family left it small practical need of a town; its spiritual need continued unabated. The loss of neighbourliness was humanly terrible and caused the pioneer's life to verge on savagery.

An Incomplete Recovery. When the pioneer had turned farmer and began to exchange his products for the goods of the city and of foreign lands under modern industrial economy, he was compelled to create town-centres to stand between him and his distant markets. His dealings with them, however, have remained primarily practical. True, the major institutions of the common community ideals focus here, but this does not bring a complete recovery of neighbourly experience. Compared with the sense of natural comradeship with his immediate farm neighbours, the countryman's attitude towards the townsman is one of estrangement,

and the townsman reciprocates. The chief moral problem of the town and country is to find a spiritual equivalent and expression of their newly-knitted economic fortunes.

The Town's Treasure. The townsman, however, kept for himself and his own town-group the strongest and completest version of neighbourly experience which exists. This remains one of the town's central characteristics. On this account the town presents the most human type of existence. The open country lost by isolation; the city loses by congestion. Through close neighbourhood the little town is the remaining seed-bed of the primary social virtues, which grow up about simple, direct and personal inter-relationships and exchange of services between people. The social value of preserving this character cannot be over-stated. It has fundamental religious significance and is susceptible of revolutionary expression in behalf of social ideals. The little town has it; the entire nation needs it. May one not trust that the town is simply its keeper against a day of its full realization for the whole people?

THE TOWN'S EVOLUTION

Grain Elevator and Cattle Pens. A study of the evolution of the typical small town substantiates these characterizations and shows how they came into being. In the newer West, for example, town beginnings are indicated by the grain elevator and cattle pens. They arise even before the permanent railroad station and are in use only during the shipping season. The embryonic town functions are performed seasonally; most

TOWN BEGINNINGS

The country store on the corner of the farm, opposite the railway "stop."

of the year everybody is a farmer. For a little while, however, some farmer must detach himself from the fields to attend to the grain and cattle shipments, and the railroad must send a man from elsewhere to perform the technical duties of a transportation agent. The farmer who lives nearest to the station "keeps" the transient town-man and gets in the habit of furnishing lodging for those farmers who come from such a distance that they cannot drive back home the same night.

The First Townsman. Next comes the permanent railroad agent who regularly boards with this farmer. His coming constitutes the first definite break with a purely rural situation. Here is one man who gains his livelihood otherwise than from the soil; and another who gains his by lodging and feeding the first. It then occurs to the next nearest farmer to move his house to the other end of his farm,—so as to be near the track —and to put a little stock of goods in his dining-room. His women folks begin to hand out occasional blocks of tobacco and plough points, while he himself farms as usual. But as the farm lands of the surrounding area become occupied, store-keeping becomes more remunerative for him than farming, and he takes his place as a permanent townsman. The corporation which maintains a "string" of lumber yards and implement warehouses along the railroad, starts a branch at the new centre. Its employés must be fed and lodged, which justifies farmer Number One in turning his house into a hotel. Some provision for amusement, generally in the shape of a pool hall, follows next; then one of the lumber yard employés marries, boards for a while, but

with the coming of a child, builds the first distinctively town home in the community.

Institutions. After a little there are enough town children to suggest moving in the country school from its old location to the town centre; after agitation and disagreement the project carries. Already the denominational missionary has come to hold religious service in the schoolhouse, and to organize a church. The location of buildings now gets attention. Main Street is laid out parallel to or at right-angles with the railroad and one or two side streets, along which houses come to arrange themselves. Down the track at the edge of the marsh the railroad builds cheap cabins for its section hands and the first breath of class distinction enters the community. The little town is now fairly defined and enters upon its typical career, with unbounded confidence in itself and in sharp rivalry with its neighbours.

Regional Variations. This is the essential story of ten thousand American communities varied only in outward aspect. In the South its beginnings are the cotton gin and the country store; in the farther West, the irrigation ditch; but the essential processes of town building are the same, and the fundamental identification of the fortunes of town and surrounding country are almost never absent.

Influence of Speculation. It must be confessed that the actual life-history of the newer little towns frequently reverses the typical story in important respects. With the spectacular westward movement of our civilization—that most marvellous and conspicuous fact in American history,—and particularly with the unpar-

alleled rise in land values, came an exploiting spirit with respect to the land, which largely expressed itself in speculative town building. Under such circumstances, to start a town was essentially to gamble on the rapid filling up of a territory and the rise of its land values. The townsman no longer waited till rural development had called his functions into being, but rushed ahead to be ready with his functions when the farmer arrived, —all in hot rivalry with other towns and with his fellow-townsman, as to who should be there first. Frequently, after the opening of a new Indian reservation, the first town-agents across the border were an automobile with a bank safe in it, and another with a stock of liquors. Speculative town building naturally exaggerated the difference between the townsman and the farmer. Instead of being partners in a legitimate enterprise, the townsman came with the purpose of exploiting the farmer; and the farmer responded with distrust and dislike. This poisoned from the beginning the natural attitudes of the two; it obscured the essential mutuality of their fortunes; and especially it forgot the total dependence of the town upon the productive country for life and prosperity.

Normal Effect of Growth. Even without the virus of the speculative spirit, the town which reaches perhaps twenty-five hundred population tends to forget its fundamental land-basis. Many of its inhabitants go through life never having guessed it. Thus in a typical community recently surveyed, about five thousand people are getting their mail from a town post office directly, or by carrier, and are trading at the town stores. These constitute the "rurban" community. About half of the

trade comes from the farmer; the other half from the townspeople themselves. The farmers have the larger half of the local bank deposits. Four-fifths of the farmers belonging to any church in the region, belong to the town churches. Such is the closeness of their identical interests. But two or three grocery and dry goods stores have already begun to cater to the townsman's peculiar tastes, particularly in their method of displaying goods. There is a large group of business places in which townsman and farmer do not meet. The farmer raises his own meat, gets along with limited furniture and wears next to no jewellery. Stores dealing in these commodities are patronized only by the townsman. The farmer has the vehicle and implement warehouses chiefly to himself. The electric light plant, the water-works and the sewers serve the town population exclusively, and the employés of these enterprises have no direct dealings with the farmer. Consequently the two halves of the community begin to lose consciousness of each other. One or more churches acquire urban pretensions and lose most of their rural membership. In the end a relatively complete order of town life arises, which follows its own ends narrowly and forgets, even if it ever knew, that it produces absolutely nothing and could not live even for a week without the farmer and his toil.

The "Black Belt." Perhaps the most appalling aspect of the division of town and open country from one another, concerns the area immediately surrounding the town. Just beyond its limits, as typical surveys have discovered, lies a belt of farm lands inhabited by a group of farm people less adequately furnished with the

neighbourhood spirit and less effectively served by the institutions of civilization than those farther from the centre. They could go to town—they are near enough; but they do not feel welcome nor at home. Yet, in sight of the church spires and within sound of the school bell, they do not feel forced to develop their own institutions as the remoter farmers do. Hence they remain in tragical stalemate,—not truly of the town nor yet of the country. The first exercise of the town's broader spirit of neighbourliness should be in their behalf.[4]

THE TOWN IN THE SOCIAL PATTERN OF THE NATION

What is a County? Turning now from the consideration of the particular centre and its surrounding country, to study the contacts and over-lappings of these natural communities within larger areas, one finds the best concrete evidence in the social surveys of typical counties. Take Walworth County in Wisconsin, for example:[5] its vital relations are not indicated nor so much as suggested by a mere map which locates every farm, every road, every store, every church, school and social institution. Humanly and vitally it consists of twelve civic centres or little towns, each with its surrounding service-area. Their edges frequently over-lap, because the farmer remotest from the centres has a choice of two or more towns at which to trade or to worship. He fluctuates from one to the other in response to the

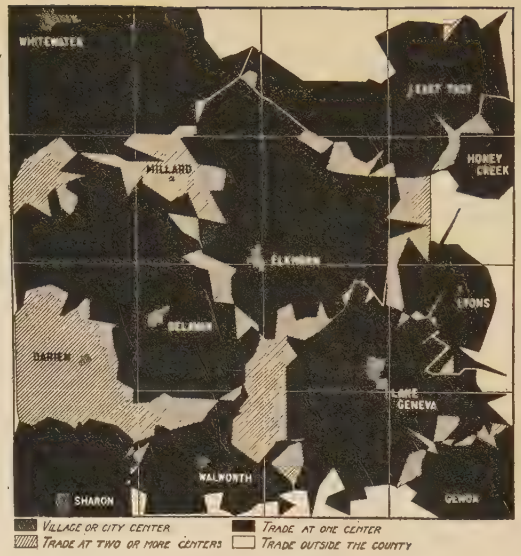
[4] Wilson, "Church at the Center," p. 81.

[5] Galpin, "A Social Survey of Walworth County, Wis," in *The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community*, University of Wisconsin Research Bulletin No. 34, p. 2.

competitive bids from town merchants or ministers for his patronage. Yet organization around twelve centres is the essential and permanent feature of the county's social life.

Fluctuating Boundaries. Naturally the area within which a town performs a given function is not exactly the same as that in which it performs a different one. A trade centre is also a banking centre, but to a somewhat larger area; because of course, there are many country stores which limit the trade area, while there are only town banks. Its newspaper zone is still larger than its banking area; but its milk zone is smaller. The newspaper does not sour as the farmer carries it home, though the milk may sour if he tries to carry it an equal distance to town. Consequently the creamery must be nearer than the post office. A man will go farther to trade than he will to pray; consequently the church zones of these twelve centres are smaller than their trade zones,—strictly rural churches filling up the gaps between. The high school zones are even more extensive, but they are less universally used by country people than are the town's economic or even religious facilities. In this respect the town functions very imperfectly; it is nevertheless a school centre and also a library centre for a definite farm area surrounding it. No picture of its life is complete or even conceivable which does not include the fact of its manifold out-reach into the open country.

The Actual Community. When one has mapped each of the service zones surrounding the little town and placed map upon map, he gets the general area within which the town is the country's centre and capital. The



Trade Communities

Church Communities

NATURAL COMMUNITIES IN A WISCONSIN COUNTY

outlines of the area are not completely distinct; thinnings-out and over-lapping characterize the edges. But consider the county as a whole, and all the farm land is seen to belong to some town or other. The country is the town's country, and the town in every case is the country's town. This is the discovery of the actual as over against the legal community. It is the revelation of the essential social pattern of the American nation. Most of the areas of the United States consists of just such over-lapping series of adjacent town centres with their supporting land areas. In them "the apparent entanglement of human life is resolved into a fairly unitary system of inter-relatedness. The fundamental community is a composite of many expanding and contracting feature-communities, possessing the characteristic pulsating instability of all real life."[6]

"Fairly Unitary." The qualification expressed in this quotation needs farther attention. The social system of town-and-surrounding-country is only "fairly unitary"; first, as has been seen, because the dominance of the older centre is frequently challenged by the growth and ambitions of the incomplete civic centres, which generally lie in the margins of its territory and already duplicate some of its institutions. As they wax strong enough, they compete for its farther advantages one after another. Their legitimate claims and rights of development have to be allowed for in any reasonable plan of community progress.

"Scrambling." Again, the older regions accumulate many exceptions to the unitary tendency. Thus a typical community of the Middle Atlantic States, cut by

[6] Wisconsin Research Bulletin No. 34, p. 18.

class stratifications of long standing, presents a far less simple situation than the average community of the Middle West. Here a typical survey[7] finds the successors of the old landed aristocracy and of the "mean white," of former Negro slaves and of more recent alien immigrants. These four classes live within a common area but in striking degree fail to use common institutions. The lines connecting homes with church, school and store cross and recross. There is a violent over-lapping of service-areas among people whose natural and convenient way would be to use common facilities. Conditions are highly uncentralized; the investigator calls them "scrambled." So effectively do they disguise the fact that a county consists of an over-lapping series of natural communities, that it escapes the investigator altogether. He presents a plan for its theoretical reorganization of entirely artificial lines. Yet the county contains a remarkable centre—a historic Quaker village whose ancient meeting house, school, lyceum, library and bank illustrate with absolute aptness the power and function of the natural as over against the artificial centre,—only in this case the centre functions for but one social class. Beginnings of like conditions are already multiplying in the Middle-West, where successive layers of foreign immigration introduce race and class distinctions, and where tenancy is increasing. "Scrambling" is on the way and needs to be checked.

[7] *A Rural Survey in Maryland*, Department of Church and Country Life, Presbyterian Board of Home Missions.

CAN THE TOWN PERFORM ITS TASK IN BEHALF OF THE COUNTRY?

A nation which is made up on this plan is certainly more interesting to live in than one which consists of legally defined areas largely rectangular, and which conceives of a given area as either rural or urban. In such a nation the effort to unify the divergent viewpoint of town and country populations, by making them conscious of their common under-lying relationships, rises to the dignity of social statesmanship and religious mediation. It presents issues fitted to thrill prophets and provoke evangelists. Yet no one will go very far in trying to work out the practical unification of town and country without bitter experiences which will drive him back into the horrors of fundamental doubt. Can the town really serve the country loyally and well?

Doubts: 1. Can the Town be Converted? In some of the most earnest minds of the nation fundamental doubts exist concerning the possibility of making the town genuinely serve the country. The issue is drawn in its most practical form over the use of the town school by country children, as already suggested in the first chapter. Many of the most influential leaders of the rural betterment movement express complete disgust with the town, and hopelessness for its educational future with respect to the country child. They think that to send him to the town school means certainly to alienate him from the country; and that consequently there should be a complete duplicatory system of rural high schools to avoid such catastrophe.

How Good is the Country's Case? The "rurban"

viewpoint will naturally raise the question whether this distrust is not essential distrust of the rural life program? So far as the town goes, the country child is already spoiled. It is to the town that he looks for most of his ideals. To the town, as analysis shows, his family goes for trade, for play and for worship. Doubtless the town's school needs conversion and redirection. It will take a revolution to bring it to the point where it genuinely feels its duty equally to the country and to the town populations. It will take revised legislation in most states to enable the town to include the entire country area which it properly serves, in one high school district. But if the rural betterment gospel is sound and convincing, cannot the farmer be trusted to see the place of the school in a unifying view of town and country relations? The alternative of town or country is already acutely before his boy and girl. Will not a school which fairly sets before them the possibilities of both, which concretely proves the undoubted economic advantages of farming, and stresses the ideals of rural life, keep as many of them permanently in the country as ought to stay? Will not the deliberate effort to segregate rural education in a corn-field environment, react against itself? Thoroughly to convert the town to a fair and helpful emphasis on rural life will not be easy. Fine and successful beginnings, however—like that of the Clinton (Iowa) Commercial Club—have already been made; and in the end self-interest will be seen to unite with altruism to make general success inevitable.

2. Is the Townsman Worth his Price? The second fundamental doubt as to the little town's usefulness con-

cerns the validity of the retailer's and middleman's functions in the social order. It should be possible to solve this theoretically by economic analysis; but only concrete studies of the results of co-operation, and added years of business experience will probably convince the farmer that the townsman on the whole is worth his price. The farmer's expert advisers, in the main, are trying to demonstrate to him that the middleman has value, and the increasingly specialized process of scientific agriculture are helping him to an appreciation of the expert in other realms. Doubtless hundreds and even thousands of little towns have no economic justification; but the town type, in its economic position between city and the farmer, ought not at this day to be brought into fundamental question.[8]

3. Will Ideals Prevail? The deepest doubts on any problem are always moral and spiritual. They ask whether man is not essentially selfish; his terms of association dictated merely by economic necessity or by profit; his assumed satisfactions in ideals transient or deceptive? In this respect the relation of the little town and the country is like any other fundamental human problem—say that of class or race. Either the better natures of men will respond to any vital vision of true and helpful possibilities, or they will not. If they will all things are possible; if not, nothing is.

FORCES MAKING FOR THE UNIFICATION OF TOWN AND COUNTRY

In view of these deep doubts it is well to note some of the strong forces which work with one who is trying

[8] Carver, "Principles of Rural Economics," p. 173.

practically to unify the thought and life of town and country.

1. The Farmer's Wider Outlook. On the farmer's side a new type of business experience has already been noted. Co-operative business enterprises undertaken by the farmer involve the employment of agents. The co-operative creamery or elevator needs a manager. He does not work in the fields as his farmer employers do; but because he is their man by whose directing ability they immediately profit, he is appreciated; while the townsman doing the same service is disliked and his profits grudgingly paid. In the more prosperous farming regions the farmer himself frequently invests in town business. An unpublished study made through one of the offices of the United States Department of Agriculture concerns an Iowa town of nine hundred population in which—following experiments in rural co-operation—the bank and leading store have come to be owned outright by farmers' stock companies. They have no idea of extending rural credit, or of catering to the farmer, or of selling at retail on a co-operative basis. They are sheer capitalists grown rich by farming, and now seeking profits by old fashioned town methods. They have learned and are turning the townsman's trick. Specialized farming again, which required expert care in the handling of products, attractive methods of crating or packing, and a display element in selection, begins to initiate the farmer into the art of retail selling, and to convince him that brains and taste have market value.

2. Good Roads and Their Social Consequences. From the side of the townsman forces are multiply-

ing to heal the breach between him and the open country. There are many old ties which are being strengthened as new ones are added. At worst, the difference between the two types of life may easily be over-stated. The forms of town life are urban, but town character was always essentially rural. Merchant and farmer stood on opposite sides of the counter, but the merchant has often been brought up on the farm and between the two men generally there was no essential difference of understanding. Now such barriers as have grown up are being removed by new co-operative activities. The good roads movement typifies the moral and social highway which is being smoothed between the town and its country. Practical co-operation in road building is symbolic of deep spiritual forces. Thus the business men of DeKalb, Illinois, the other day shovelled gravel to furnish a strip of country road; the farmers did the teaming; the county bought the gravel. Thus the Washington (Pennsylvania) Board of Trade has opened a Community House equipped with conveniences, as a place of resort and rest for farmers who come to town to trade,—in the confessed purpose of off-setting the printed attractions of the mail order catalogues. It has remained for an Indiana commercial club to guarantee a hundred patrons from its town to any chicken supper prepared by a country church in its neighbourhood! Such episodes are frequently repeated in many sections, and their combined significance is great.

3. Rural Rapid Transit. All writers on country life insert at this point in the discussion a rhapsody upon the automobile. Given good roads, cheap fuel and the gas engine, the distinction between town and country

largely disappears. The farmer in his car gets into market quicker than the suburbanite can reach his city office. Add to this, increasing prosperity which enables the farmer to purchase the automobile, and every external difficulty disappears which forbids him to master both modes of life. He is no longer a countryman; he is a countryman with an automobile—a very different person—and the town is as much his as it is the townsman's.

4. Town Investments in the Country. Even the much execrated absentee landlord may be a unifying link between town and country. The tenant has less stake in the welfare of the farm than the owner has, even if the latter lives in town. The retired farmer is frequently of no benefit to the town because he was never of any benefit to the country. He was non-progressive there, and non-progressive he remains. But as townsman with a stake in the country, he keeps the roads open between the two and may be a valuable offset to the tendency of the farming class to segregate mentally as well as socially. Some of the profounder lessons of agriculture—such as the value of permanent fertility above this year's profits—come more easily to the town-dwelling farm owner than to the farmer actually upon the soil. Because of his ability to put intelligent pressure upon the farmer both in the matter of industry and methods, the country banker—or in the South, the merchant who gives the farmer credit—are in position to be of great service as links between town and country.[9]

In the case of the banker a more rational agriculture

[9] Carver, "Principles of Rural Economics," p. 276.

is showing that it is because the farmer farms speculatively that he is charged speculative rates of interest. When he diversifies his crops and begins honest bookkeeping with himself he finds that there is a reason for the money lender's point of view. Every intelligent town investor in farm lands supplements the human forces which make for mutual understanding and ultimate good will. The merchant is experiencing to his sorrow the farmer's newly discovered business ability and effective plans for eliminating the retailer and middleman. Under this pressure he begins to understand that both parties to a bargain must be satisfied, and that he must cease to be a mere exploiter of the farmer for his own profit. Thus is laid the economic foundation which moral and social enthusiasm must utilize and perfect.

5. Intensive Agriculture. The reclamation enthusiast's glowing vision of irrigated regions as new Gardens of Eden is often partly realized and largely solves the antagonism of town and country by identifying the two. Utterly dependent upon the collective control of water, almost necessarily practicing co-operation in marketing; specializing in production; living in close social contacts, and often in intelligence and luxury, on thirty or forty, and often on even five- or ten-acre holdings, the irrigation farmer has town life in all essentials.[10] Intensive agriculture without irrigation, though not destined to be general in America, has some of the same possibilities.

6. Legislation. In the interest of town and country

[10] Hess, "Socio-Economic Aspects of Irrigation," in "Cyclopedia of American Agriculture," p. 167.

unification, legislation must go much farther than yet dreamed, but significant beginnings have been made—chiefly as yet in school matters—the details of which will appear in later paragraphs. In the long run, if the analysis of this chapter is correct, we must reach an entirely new type of local government based upon the natural and actual community as over against the geometrical and artificial one. The New England town has always been such a natural community; and ultimately the whole nation should have the right to determine by actual surveys the boundaries of its natural communities and to constitute them legal political units.

THE POTENTIAL MISSIONARY SPIRIT OF THE LITTLE TOWN

Foreshadowings. No general idealistic movement in behalf of the little towns—especially in the light of their social solidarity with and potential leadership of the open country—is yet to be discerned in America. That one is needed is the essential plea of this book. There are to be sure the well defined and widely useful Village Improvement Societies of New England—some two hundred of them. A multitude of experiments in all parts of the country show that the newly acute social spirit has invaded the little-town realm also. Many townsmen are becoming aware of the needs and promise of their immediate home fields. Some of these betterment movements definitely seek to link town and open country. The enthusiasm and moral insight of the rural life movement ought everywhere to be available in this behalf, and its recognition of the little town as the effective centre of its operation is at least fore-shad-

owed.[11] Yet nowhere is there anything like a general consciousness of response to the specific vision and process of "rurbanism" as outlined above. The towns as a group are ignorant of their anointing for service and are as yet unbaptized with the missionary spirit.

Re-kindling Old Fires. Yet the town form of civilization is peculiarly susceptible of use by the missionary spirit. A striking group of them were founded with the definite purpose of being centres of morality and intelligence to the surrounding country and the prospective commonwealth. Definite convictions tend to express themselves in compact communities and in the town order of life. In contrast with the scattering, inchoate life of the frontier, the constructive statesmanship of western settlement concerned itself largely with the founding of towns. It was by compact communities that Mormonism conquered the desert; their dominance from the first over the outlying rural regions has made Utah the first state to abolish utterly the ungraded district school. It was his genius for founding towns which made the Yankee the social school-master of the frontier, often in regions where the dominant populations numerically were of other stocks. Often he transplanted towns bodily, picking up church, academy and community organization and setting them down with undiminished power as evangelizing centres in the midst of the prairie. There are such towns in which the tradition of definite missionary vocation to the larger community still lives. Certainly nothing could so lift the

[11] *Bridging the Gap of Indifference between City and County*—pamphlet of the Clinton (Iowa) Commercial Club. The American City, VIII, p. 398.

entire group of them out of disillusion, the sense of failure and of frequent self-contempt as the clear perception that it is largely the little town which is to solve the rural problem of the nation.

Not Necessary to Become a Foreign Missionary. The most stupendous moral loss to any community is from failure to find scope within its immediate sphere for the latent ideals of its people. This cup the little town has drunk to the dregs. Most of its finer youth has gone away—virtually all of them have thought it necessary to go—for the realization of their dreams of service to significant and heroic causes. It was the tears of a girl who wanted to be a foreign missionary and could see no outlet for her devotion in her own little town, which inspired one of the most notably revolutionary cases of civic advance recorded in this book. The town is little in itself, but great through its potential leadership and service of the country. The mere opening of the mind to that fact assures the flow of mighty and regenerating tides of purpose and adventure through many a stagnant Littleton.

IV

THE TOWN'S PEOPLE

CONTRASTING ENVIRONMENTAL TYPES

If the heavens rained literal blood and the earth opened once a year to release apocalyptic beasts, mankind would be different; but less so than he has become under the steady pressure of the less striking phenomenon of home surroundings and conditions of labour.

Effect of Isolation. The farmer breakfasts with no evidence of neighbours but the distant crowing of cocks and baying of dogs. His family separates silently to its tasks, themselves often remote from one another. Possibly two men and teams may be working in the same field, but commonly beyond the range of conversation. For other human society there is just a chance that the neighbouring farmer will be ploughing or cultivating across the fence, or that one will reach the end of the corn row at the highway while a team is passing. But the day may come and go—many days do—without essential break in the family isolation of the farm home and its labouring group.

Effect of Congestion. The city tenement dweller on the other hand, falls to sleep in an unnoted Babel, and rises to one. The sights, noises, smells and physical pressure of thousands of fellow mortals are thrust upon the toughened senses. Floor space costs money and he

may therefore work in the reeking proximity of the Ghetto sweatshop. In a cigar factory in Tampa two thousand operators of both sexes and all races and colours mingle indiscriminately, are seated back to back, shoulder to shoulder and knee to knee with narrow benches between. What wonder that their lives come to bear the stamp of mass-thinking as well as mass-action.

The Happy Medium. The little townsman has already greeted his fellow this morning as he splits the kindling or feeds his chickens in the back yard. His wife has called a "good morning" to her neighbour during domestic processes, or compared notes on infant diseases over the fence. As the man starts "down town" he is sure to find and fall in step with another man, breathing friendliness—and possibly the diverse interests of another calling. All day the incidental contacts of life continue, varied and shifting. There is leisure for humour, for human intercourse for its own sake. The rear of some store becomes an informal club of village notables. There is pause in the day's work; noon, with the school children trooping home; the return of the business man to dinner; the comings and goings of women to market or club; the daily exodus of half of the inhabitants when the train comes in; the equal interest in the base ball club; the concourse of the whole town at fight or fire. This is social richness and complexity as compared with farm environment; on the other hand, it is an open formation of life and informality in contrast with the city's regimentation. These make the little townsman what he is, giving him his well-marked characteristics as the man of the minor centre.

THE TOWNSMAN'S CHARACTERISTICS

1. The Townsman Walks. Cataloguing the more obvious of these characteristics,—those directly due to peculiar town environment,—the first fact to demand notice is that walking distance constitutes the limit of neighbourhood in the little town, just as team-haul distance does in the open country and rapid transit facilities do in the city. This is curiously affirmed by the social isolation of people living just between walking and driving distance. The characteristic "black belt," described in the third chapter, is a strip around the town beginning one or two miles from the centre. Only the energetic will walk so far to enjoy full social relationship as offered by the town, yet hitching up a horse to go so short a distance hardly seems reasonable. The consequence is that just beyond easy walking distance there lies a Robinson Crusoe type of life. The most crucial question of location for every little-town home is, "How far is it to the centre?" When the pressure of population forces town limits beyond walking distance the street car comes and the little town ceases to be little.

2. The People of the Little Town Work Indoors. Labour is not in first hand contact with nature. As protected from weather its conditions are more controlled and regular than those of the country. Work is not done seasonally, nor daily from sun to sun. With artificial light men not only choose their hours, but contrive to have shorter hours for labour. In the little town most of them do not work at manual labour. "Seed time and harvest, summer and winter, cold and heat," hardening the hands and forcing a daily response from the linea-

ments of the human face have not wrought their corresponding deep impress upon character as they have in the farmer's case. Yet the challenge of nature is not entirely absent from the little townsman's life. He must shovel his own snow before he can go to work in winter, and there is no public vehicle to carry him about in case of cold or heat. He escapes nature less than the city man does, though far more than the farmer.

3. The Little Townsman's Life is Bi-focal. It has two centres,—home and "down town"—the latter meaning shop, store or office. The farm has but one centre, the home. The work of the surrounding open fields cannot be centralized but must be followed from place to place. But analyse the consciousness of any member of the little-town group and one finds "down town" deeply written within. The merchant shuttles between his two centres of life twice or three times daily. The woman of any freedom or energy gets "down town" several times a week at least, and thus keeps in touch with her other world. The child comes home from school via "down town" if he dares. No other type of existence revolves so completely about two familiar and definite centres. The devoted monotony of it bores the city man inexpressibly. "Main-Street and home-again" is almost a complete formula for the little town.

4. Some Variety of Occupation. There is no such solidarity of the family group in labour in the little town as on the farm. Members of one family may have different jobs, different sources of income. In the rural home all work, practising the minor divisions of agricultural labour, the lighter tasks falling to women and children; but much of farm work is relatively inter-

HOME AND "DOWN TOWN"—POOR DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

The town "has" electric lights and sewers but the majority of its homes are not connected

changeable, and at a pinch all pitch in at any task. The townsman's wife may rarely stand behind his counter (usually her place is home), but his son or daughter may often find livelihood in work different from their father's.

5. Woman's Widening Sphere. The most significant aspect of this change is that which relates to woman and her outlook. The little town's version of woman's employment outside the home is narrow compared with the city's. It affords her quite enough, however, to cause radical differences of thought and feeling and to initiate many new attitudes. To become clerk, stenographer or telephone operator is the potential resource of any unmarried woman who does not relish the domestic round or who seeks economic independence, Belleville's fourteen per cent. of gainfully employed women are quite enough to introduce a mild version of femininism.

6. Beginning of Public Utilities. The town home has surrendered many of its economic functions to the community. Particularly many of its "chores" are done collectively. The townsman does not carry his lantern; his streets are electric-lighted. He no longer "totes" water; it runs from the hydrant. Whether purchased over the counter or ordered by telephone, his groceries come to the door in the delivery wagon. The disposal of garbage and sewage are yet in debate as between town and home; these functions may or may not have become municipalized. On the woman's part, the electric lighting of the home dispenses with the disagreeable burden and danger of kerosene lamps. The steam laundry relieves the wash tub and the bakery and kitchen range.

These tend to offset the fact that the little town can neither afford nor secure household service, and that members of the family must do most of the domestic labour. The home still carries fuel for thousands of stoves and goes to the post office for its own mail. From the farmer's standpoint, however, an enormous amount of labour has passed from the home to the shoulders of the community collectively.

7. Frequent Community Enterprises. The little town's people are accustomed to collective action in the common interest. In most directions this is the potential capacity rather than one continuously exercised. In the mercantile sense, however, there is a fairly steady exercise of town enterprise, particularly in the interest of nearby trade. Most of the time it is inefficiently expressed, and is often fitful in the extreme; but a new plan of advertising, a fair, a subsidy for a new factory or the erection of a new church or public building, finds characteristic response in the business community of the little town. Voluntary initiative takes care of such matters most of the time. Often there is little organization or acknowledged leadership within the commercial group. The same interests support a base ball team as a means of advertisement and of relaxation. This is little enough; yet co-operation in the furtherance of community purposes occurs fifty times among townsmen to once among farmers; and this co-operation is far more immediate and personal than are the more systematized and regular communal forces of the city.

8. Variety with Democracy. The little town's people have the flavour of occupational variety in their habitual contacts, especially through the familiar presence of the

professional classes. No other community enjoys such close daily fellowship with men of so wide a range of vocation or calling. The former's typical day includes no man who is not a farmer. The minister's or doctor's visit to him is an event; the visit to a lawyer a catastrophe. Contracts with the professional classes are equally absent from the city artisan's daily experience. They are available within the prosperous city circles through the church and social intercourse, yet limited and hedged about by distinctions of wealth and class. In the little town, on the other hand, all sorts and conditions of men are known intimately and familiarly. Wealth and poverty are near enough together to call one another by their first names. This adds range to the average human experience.

9. Recreation Institutionalized. The little town possesses the specialized institutions of play as well as of work, and worship;—witness the statistical record of Belleville's recreation in the first chapter. Only the city, of course, gives to play equal dignity with or superiority over the sober aspects of life. The farm allows it nothing but incidental and grudging expression. While it remains puritanical compared with the city, the little town directly institutionalizes play, daring to call its barren public hall an opera house and regularly supporting a moving picture place. The lyceum courses or Chautauqua, in which recreation is given respectability under the mantle of "improvement," find their special field here. Moral heart-searchings in matters of social amusement characterize such communities: their indecisive attitude toward the whole realm of recreation creates many of the most difficult issues of little-town life.

In this, as in all the characteristics so far catalogued, the little town occupies a definitely intermediate position, though one balancing toward the urban side. On the whole it is more like the city than like the country in the external forms of its life. So far, then, as the average little townsman is able to understand himself, his sense that his life is a miniature edition of the city is natural and indeed inevitable.

VARIATIONS WITHIN LITTLE-TOWN POPULATION

Of course the people of the little town are not entirely homogeneous in character. There are minor differences of elemental human stuff. Its diverse elements yield in differing ways and degrees to environmental pressure. As a whole, the townspeople show a residual rural inheritance incompletely conquered by an environment tending to urban forms. Together they constitute a mediating type—and will continue to do so.

The Townsman Born. Naturally the most perfect expression of his type is the native son of the little town. Hundreds of thousands of Americans live and die knowing no other environment. When they move about it is within their native stratum of population. They are keenly sensitive to their difference from the farmer; yet the equilibrium of rural life is simply disturbed in them; they have never really acquired urban traits. No radical readjustment of capacity and temper has been effected. The unmarried woman, for example, has no such recognized, assured and permanent place in the social and economic order as the city gives her. There is scant provision for the permanently unmarried man. Contrast the little-town boarding house with the urban

bachelor's club! Yet in the little-townsman a relatively stable type is presented. While under American conditions all types are fluid, this one is as specific and permanent as any other.

The Accidental Townsman. The ruralist is especially represented by the retired farmer,[1] and by other recruits from the open country. Often he constitutes a majority of the population in Middle-Western town-communities. Although he has come to town all his life for trade and worship, he finds living in town an entirely different matter. His natural reaction is toward the ways of the open country. He insists on keeping pigs and poultry. Psychologically speaking, his mind is more traditional than that of the native townsman, and when he retires to town it is with habits hardened to adamant. Taxes for public purposes outrage him, and to pay cash for food is a night-mare. Along with younger generations escaped from the country, in the persons of farm boys and girls who enter town life through matrimony or business, he constitutes a most serious problem for the little town's digestive capacities. As already suggested, this invasion of the town by country people ought to be utilized for the unification of the two halves of the natural community. At present it often operates to their further estrangement.

The Town's Professional Leadership. Frequently it is city-bred or at least city-trained. Naturally it pulls in the opposite direction from the farmer's, and it is responsible for much of the town's aping of the city—so characteristic and unfortunate. The doctor, lawyer, teacher, librarian and minister get their clues to life and

1 See Vogt, "Rural Sociology," p. 410.

their interpretation of success from their wider opportunities of education and travel. Who that has ever served a little town in any of these capacities can escape the charge of having misled the community in some at least of its more general ambitions and ideals? The ambitious professional man uses the little town, as he does the country, as a stepping stone to higher things, meanwhile infusing his own spirit of impermanence and unrest into the younger generation. Since the city-trained leadership represents the innovating spirit in the little town, it constitutes an especially subtle appeal to youth. Youth is for innovation as against old ways. It is not necessary, however, that the innovators speak for the city. Let the rural movement become eager and confident, let it show energy and initiative, and it will get the boys and girls as surely as the city does. It is the direction rather than the fact of leadership which is at fault. The professional classes need most of all to have the astigmatism of their wider opportunities corrected and to catch the vision of the town's own possibilities and of its splendid outreach into the open country.

The Town and the Foreigner. Alien groups imposed upon the little town are left largely undigested by the social order. The occasional family of another nationality or race is indeed taken in without great embarrassment to most of the privileges of the community; but let any considerable number of such people present themselves and they are quickly formed into an almost impenetrable clan on the town's outskirts. In spite of their small numbers, the process of their assimilation is relatively slower than in the city. The world war has shown that some of the most un-American communities in

America are small towns in the Middle-West. There is not that keen sense of life-and-death struggle either to assimilate or to be submerged by the alien mass, which the city knows so well. Hence the town's assimilating processes are feeble and unsteady. Under the stimulus of the frontier, where all comers start life in essential equality, the alien of nearer lineage, like the Scandinavian in the Northwest, assimilates in a generation. Even under these favouring circumstances the Slav may remain alien indefinitely. Old towns especially prove utterly inadequate to the task of making over into their own likeness any new group entrenched in a mass-life of alien sort. As a class also, the little town strangely fails to achieve the higher and more spiritual unity of the city. In spite of its seething differences of population, a city somehow manages to get itself a collective character and to make a forceful individual impression. One can always tell pretty definitely what a given city is like. The little town frequently remains an indistinguishable member of an undistinguished class.

FORTUNES OF AGE—AND STATUS GROUPS WITHIN THE POPULATION

The unique and intermediate character of the little town is further evidenced by its utilization or failure to utilize its people according to their age and status. Omitting fractions, thirty-one per cent. of the American population are children under fourteen years of age. About nineteen per cent. are adolescents. Forty-three per cent. are in the years of maturity and only about four per cent. are classified as old. About fifty-five per cent. of marriageable men are married, and fifty-eight

of marriageable women. It will be interesting to note how the little town treats each of the classes here distinguished.

Childhood. The fortunes of childhood reflect the intermediate nature of the little town's whole situation. There are no such extensive "chores" on the one hand as furnish significant and appropriate labour to the farm boy and girl; and on the other hand, no massed and systematized child-labour such as the city imposes upon immature life. The little town has a bad reputation as a place to bring up children. The chief vocational impulse which their environment brings is one of drifting and delaying decision as to life work. This is in sharp contrast with economic seriousness which the average country or city child alike draws from its earliest breath.

The little town cannot furnish normal opportunities of work to its children. Play taken seriously—which means educative play, supervised and adequately paid for—is a partial solution, though one very rarely furnished by the little town. But nothing can supply its lack of serious vocational atmosphere as it affects childhood.

Youth. For youth the little town furnishes a few economic opportunities, but too few, and too poorly paid. In spite of the unusual advantage of having railroad shops, Belleville paid more than seventy per cent. of the unmarried men less than $12.00 per week. Indeed there are not enough jobs in all the little towns put together to utilize their adolescent vigour. The farm boy may have to go elsewhere to farm, but the farm has work for him somewhere—in Canada if not at home. Not so the little town with respect to its sons. They are forced to

go to another kind of place to find opportunity. For this reason it is utter folly to try to segregate them with the farm population, which is already relatively heavy enough. The little town can out-breed its opportunities, and the city must take its surplus. The educational viewpoint of the little town must therefore be broad enough to include both urban and rural prospects. On the other hand, the lack of immediate summons or allurement keeps the average youth of the little town longer in school than under any other American environment. This is great gain and permits the little town to furnish, as it always has done, a disproportionate number of the nation's professional leaders. The prospect of staying through high school and going to college is far more general here than for young people of any other circumstances or class. In spite of its narrow resources, Belleville sent half its high school graduates to higher institutions.

Detached Womanhood. Her fortunes have already been referred to. The little town makes a beginning in giving opportunity outside of the home; but woman's utilization is very incomplete. There are few jobs and a surplus of unmarried women. The town's boys, whose larger freedom of movement takes them more numerously to the city, do much of their mating there. On the other hand, the conditions of town economy do not compel universal matrimony which is a fundamental condition of rural life. Neither bachelor nor unmarried woman can exist long in the open country. Consequently, as another evidence of its betwixt-and-between character, the little town harbours more than its share of "old maids." For this reason no other type of commun-

ity can command so large a voluntary force for its idealistic purposes. Church, women's clubs and all pursuits of ideals find an army of women with some measure of leisure and desire to be useful, ready to be mobilized for service. This constitutes one of the choicest assets of the little town in solving its immediate problems. Here is the most plentiful and unhurried supply of workers—if not the most competent—for every good work.

Old Age. And what of age? The little town is its paradise; but to confess this is hard on the little town. Here the scale of life is reduced to suit the waning powers. The home is near enough to the centre for even the feeble to walk. There are just enough "chores," enough ground for a little garden, a scheme of life just right for the aged. Society is simple and leisurely enough to appreciate old people, personal enough to love and cherish them. The hoary head is conspicuous in town assemblies as it is conspicuous for absence in the city.

FORTUNES OF INSTITUTIONS

Combining now the total characteristics of the little town population and of its sub-groups, as they unite to effect institutions, one finds that institutions are generally under-valued and that their operation is neither prompt nor efficient. No institutional stitch is in time. Evils crowd on to be cured when they ought to be prevented through the positive functioning of social processes.

Institutions Incomplete in Scope. Thus, economic institutions seldom cover the entire area of the town. It is said to "have" water works and a sewer system,

but half the people are not using these agents of collective life. None of the outlying families except the wealthy are reached. Electric lights cost too much, both in initial installation and monthly charges. Many a little town which counts itself very up to date would be appalled by an actual survey of these points. This generalization holds for every section of the nation without exception.

Institutions Inefficient in Operation. When public facilities are provided they are inefficiently operated and poorly kept up. Nobody is well served by them. Electric lights have a habit of going out; the water supply fails; the sidewalks are in bad condition; years pass without the overhauling of plant. Money is not put aside annually to cover depreciation; there are no standards of efficiency reflecting a keen sense of the vital dependence of the closely settled community upon these agents of collective life. The city must keep up its utilities or perish. The town is content to fall back periodically upon the cistern and kerosene lamp.

Institutions Inadequate in Social Strength. Social organization in the little town fails to utilize the individual whom town economy has freed from family solidarity. There is more change in human character than is registered in institutions, albeit that institutions are numerous enough and that the little townsman is the champion "jiner" of America. What he has, however, is multiplicity of organization rather than aptness and adaptation. His institutions simply repeat old patterns. Exceptional individuals and partly differentiated groups, whether above or below the town's average, do not find vital expression through them.

Failure of Institutions with Respect to Social Classes. Wealth, nationality and social history frequently divide the little town sharply; yet it does not organize its social classes effectively when it has them. Thus industry, even on the little-town scale of a separates its operatives into an alien group on the physical outskirts of the community and beyond the pale of social privilege. The first resource of democracy faced by class distinction is to raise class consciousness to a higher pitch; to give each group of people class organs and institutions; to evoke group-purpose and to make it capable of group-action. Through these processes each class is able to make space in which to grow and find chance of development, parallel at least, with that of the more favoured groups. In the largest cities, even the newest comer falls into a large use of common institutions. There come to be more and more equal contacts between leaders. Finally through the steady pull of assimilative forces, all groups achieve large participation in the fundamentals of civilization. In the little town, on the contrary, the classes who are not in possession of the social machinery remain voiceless, their masses inchoate, their conditions unprogressive, unperfected. They are soon thought of as degenerate and come actually to be so through physical and mental inbreeding. Compare the hopeless aspect of the Negro group within the small town anywhere with the progress which it frequently shows in the open country and large city.

Failure of Institutions with Respect to Social Interests. The fitful and occasional character which has already been discovered in the business enterprise of the

SOCIAL SEGREGATION OF INDUSTRIAL POPULATIONS WITHIN SMALL COMMUNITIES

small town, exhibits itself in other spheres. Nowhere are fundamental instincts steadily served. Social interests, as expressed in entertainments and diversions, flare up and flicker. Their fires burn under forced draught for awhile, then die down altogether. In its "speedy" moments the little town goes faster than the city itself. Then a social languor seizes it and dulness reigns supreme. Religious and civic interests follow the same law. The formula of life is revival and back-sliding.

The Fortunes of the Professional Classes. In common with the institutions which they serve, the professional classes experience spasmodic treatment from the little town. They are personally regarded but functionally under-rated. People know them too well as individuals. It is impossible to keep up professional "bluff." Their appreciation varies as the whims of individuals and communities. Their failures are known to everybody. The city surgeon can hide his unsuccessful operations. The city pastor has a longer tenure than a minister of the small town, largely because the people are too busy to elaborate upon his weaknesses; also because they are too much interested otherwise to make his capacity to amuse or inspire of large personal consequence. Little townspeople become rapidly partisan over their leaders and the causes they represent,—their denominationalism, their politics, their commercial rivalries. In the city all the functions of life are performed steadily and in large measure, anonymously, their reasonable average of success or failure being assumed without bitterness and without special pity or affection. In capacity for love and hate Littleton has no equal.

THE ASCENDANCY OF THE PERSONAL OVER THE SOCIAL

All told, there is more human nature to the square mile in the little town than anywhere else in America. Everywhere in it the personal overshadows the social. Instincts and passions dominate. Social forces and institutions are not yet strong enough completely to civilize or socialize the little townsman. They have not had him away from the country long enough nor have they had urban opportunity to work their work upon him. Certain infelicities of town life grow out of this situation; it explains, on the other hand, some of its major advantages.

Exaggeration of Personality. The little town tolerates all manner of cranks and eccentrics. The social rebel is not overborne but amiably allowed for and cherished. Types whom the city would immediately banish to asylum and penitentiary are permitted to flourish. Individual vagaries break up town monotony and have large market value. The fool is a town institution. It could not get along without him.

Too Much Human Nature. The accumulation, concentration and inbreeding of human cross-purposes in the little town result in a moral situation for which "petty cussedness" and "cussed pettiness" is the only adequate formula. Within a deadening traditionalism the little round of life goes on, obscured and misshapen by personal humours and passions. There is too much human nature and too little escape for it into the larger and more ennobling avenues of human endeavour.

Superficial Interpretation of Personality. With all the town's large allowance for the personal so long as its

vagaries keep within the established social tradition, there is little patience for it when it wanders in untried ways. In the city, it is a normal attitude to regard life as a venture in which stakes should be offered and risked. The reality and solemnity of personal responsibility for novel decisions is well recognized. The little town will have none of this. The serious issues of life are not to be questioned. The individual may be eccentric and perverse, but he must not make novel choices nor depart essentially from the ways of the fathers. Society is essentially unadventurous and non-initiating. Personality in its profoundest aspects is not respected.

THE ABIDING ADVANTAGES OF LITTLE-TOWN LIFE

Desirability of Life Freighted with Personal Significance. Of native ability—apart from occasional degenerate strands in its texture,—the little town undoubtedly affords a first-rate human average. A majority of the people who live in such towns, live there because they belong there, because they instinctively prefer the pace and manner of its life. They are not less intelligent or able than others, but they enjoy life in moderation and detail. They like to take its one-thing-after-another without haste or abstraction. They may put greater curiosity and intellectual earnestness into the study of existence on a smaller scale than the masses of either country or city bring to their environments. Much of a fundamental sort is to be said in favour of the life which is most freighted with personal significance. In this respect the little town has clear advantage. The city man must forever run here and there to find his satisfaction. The little townsman is more of a philosopher

and discovers more of the meaning of life within; yet without the numbing isolation of all more remote rural life.

The Chance of the Average Man. Still farther on the credit side: the little town affords to the average man an unusual opportunity for leadership. Being an average man, he could not hope to move the city or the nation. The little town, however, reduces the demand for active life to the scale of the average man's mature capacities just as its less exacting demands fit in with the limited powers of the aged. Real leadership is just as necessary in the small as in the larger. In limited but fruitful fields, such as the little town presents, daring, patience, tact and loyalty in moderate degrees yield more than average rewards and may even hope for conspicuous successes.

Mediation a Great Human Office. Finally, just such a character as has been described is needed to serve as mental middle-man between the city and the open country. The little townsman is not so unsocialized as to feel fundamentally at outs with the city environment. He is aware of his temporary disadvantage with respect to it, yet confident of his ability to learn promptly and to use whatever the city has to offer. On the other hand, he is not too socialized in his inner character to serve the man of radical isolation. He is near enough to the farmer to understand him. Thus he may be and is useful in both directions. He has a definite affinity for both types and his character is complementary to each.

The Little Happinesses. With respect to the city the little townsman must doubtless remain a follower. He cannot reach heights gained only by complete concentra-

tion and specialization. He must give himself personally to the whole detail of business or profession. The great captain of industry, student or artist, delegates this to others in order to free his own mind for the formulation of policies, or for creative activity. The townsman cannot keep his hands clean nor free himself from the large necessity of manual labour. From the standpoint of the farmer's training, however, he enjoys a large measure of specialized education and the opportunity of concentration which means capacity for leadership. His is the more originating and directive habit of life. This the farmer actually recognizes; most of his immediate leaders, social, economic, religious, political,—are little townsmen. He will follow them when he will acknowledge no leader of his own kind. The townsman has also versatility which the countryman lacks, and may project himself in many directions: he has leisure as well to make himself relatively the master of this or that field. The world is too much with the city man. The townsman, standing off a little from it, may get the better perspective, share it the more unhurriedly and judge it the more wisely. Thus he leads a balanced, moderate life, a life yielding not only great rewards in personal satisfaction, but affording also great opportunities for social service and for philosophical insights. He may be both a happy man and a useful one.

V

THE TOWN'S POSSIBILITIES: STRUCTURAL FUNDAMENTALS

STANDARDIZING COMMUNITIES

The judge rises to pronounce sentence upon the criminal; the school master marks away with his blue pencil at a pile of examination papers; the factory inspector scrutinizes a manufacturing plant for ventilating devices, safety appliances and fire precautions; the accountant sifts the firm's books; the preacher takes a text from the Ten Commandments; the housewife counts the missing buttons of her neighbour's children and scans the family washing as it hangs in their back yard. Suppose they all were constituted a committee and went up and down a state judging not individuals—but communities.

What Constitutes a Good Town? This, almost literally, it what has happened to Kansas.[1] In 1914–15, forty of the larger towns and smaller cities entered a contest in civic excellence for first and second prizes of $1000 and $500 respectively. After sifting written arguments, a committee, including the President of the State Teachers' Association and the State Sanitary Inspector, actually visited and graded the fifteen most promising

[1] Harger, "What Makes a Model Town," *Independent*, July 12, 1915, p. 53.

contestants, and awarded the honours. Winfield won, with Independence second. A similar contest for 1915–16 was limited to the smaller towns. The movement originated and is carried out by the Extension Division of the State University. Kansas has already begun to answer officially, "What constitutes a good town?"

Inadequacy of Popular Conceptions of Progress. Rigidly scientific standards and methods for judging communities belong doubtless some distance in the future. Enough, however, is surely established to demolish the standards of self-complacency and conceit which characterize the average towns, and which supply matter for endless wrangling between their rival weekly newspapers. This particular place, for example, chooses to call itself "The Bread and Butter Town," and advertises the fact by a "booster" sign at the railway station. There are anti-tuberculosis placards in the post office and anti-saloon posters on the telephone poles. On a vacant lot between business buildings there is a school garden where the whole community may see it. One of the churches has recently been enlarged. There is a new concrete "lock-up." The commercial club has issued a glowing descriptive booklet setting forth the virtues of the town. On the outskirts is a fair ground, and may not one hear the town band practising in the "K. P." hall? A vast amount of civic "good" is going on after this fashion in America. The instinct toward it is fairly indigenous, though its expressions are largely imitation. "I read it in a magazine; let's try it here," is the usual formula. Specific organization for community betterment is still the exception. Its cases number by hundreds, while the towns are thousands. The results in

the large present an incoherent and Topsy-like picture.

Science Applied to Civics. The attempted precision of judgment involved in the Kansas contest as described above, was sought by the use of a system of scoring by points. Assuming that a good town is one which is good to bring up children in, six fundamental aspects of child welfare were set up as tests of excellence and formulated as follows: (1) opportunities for play and athletics; (2) school work and industrial training; (3) social and recreational activities; (4) physical and moral safeguards; (5) activities of child-fostering clubs and societies; (6) attendance at Sunday school and kindred organizations. These six major tests were then elaborated into about forty subordinate points. The town which averaged highest on points was declared the best town. No one will dispute the correctness of the Kansas instinct in making child welfare a fundamental criterion of civic excellence; yet certainly it is not the only one. A good town to bring up children in, which cannot keep them alive while being brought up, lacks something of final goodness. The Texas "cleanest town" contest is therefore a necessary supplement to the Kansas scheme of judging communities. A completely developed scheme would include all the major civic interests now practically before American towns,—possibly thirty or forty in all—and might discover two or three hundred score-points worth weighing. The variety of civic improvement movements recorded in the current magazines at least approximates these figures. By analysing their relations and combining them upon proper principles an approximate science of community excellence may ultimately be reached.

Limitation of Civic Possibilities by Size and Wealth. In using any such standard as an actual test, it is manifest that the size of the community and its economic resources will have to be considered. The particular form in which a town's possibilities can be realized depends upon the number and wealth of its people, the taxable values of the community and ultimately upon the prosperity of the supporting country area. The case of twenty-five families organized into an incorporated village in a rich farming country is not the same as that of a similar number of families in a depleted or undeveloped country. The case of one hundred families is not the same as that of two hundred.

Generic Possibilities. Nevertheless there are certain excellencies available for the whole group of little towns as contemplated by this discussion. With respect to their common conditions certain current methods of improvement are open. In their application they vary with the character and size of the community, but so far as they grow out of its essential character they apply to all little towns and are capable of generalized statement.

Such a statement is attempted in this and the two following chapters.

First of all come the fundamental considerations of the town's control of its physical environment and of itself as the economic and social environment of its people. However large or small it may be, it can strive toward certain basic virtues in these relations.

THE TOWN'S PHYSICAL PLAN

The Ordinary Checker Board Arrangement. The little town may have a good physical plan. Except that

it is traditionally laid off into rectangular blocks regulated by streets, and that it is generally bisected by a railroad with a series of grade crossings giving a maximum of inconvenience, ugliness and danger, the little town is essentially unplanned. It grows by indefinite extensions of the checker board arrangement of geographical units. When this method is necessarily modified by the physical features of the town site these features are rarely made to function in its plan. They remain barriers and accidents. If there is a river it soon becomes a sewer. A hill remains merely a hill through which an ugly cut must some day be made. Hundreds of new towns have sprung up in the last decade without intelligence enough in location to secure natural drainage or to avoid a slough or a sink hole at the very centre.

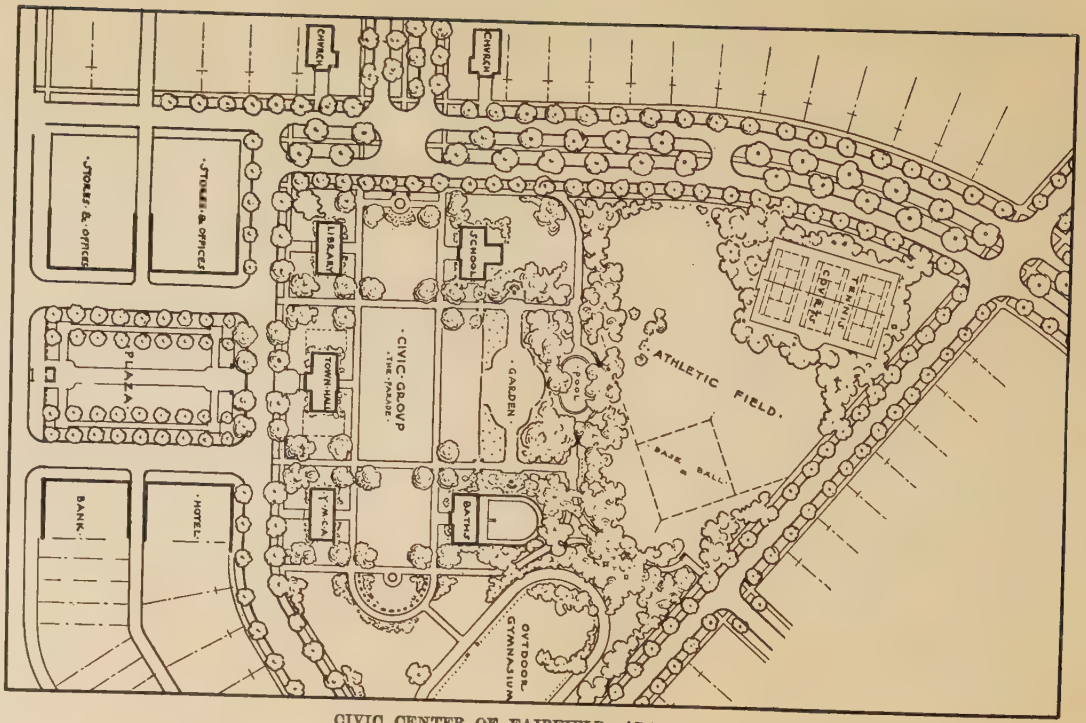
A Few Well Planned Towns. Some of the ancient towns of the Atlantic seaboard brought over European traditions of good town planning, and rare examples survived westward migration. One who knows a certain Western state intimately remembers just one little town which from the beginning arranged its public buildings adjacent to a central green, which in turn fronted its business centre. The three leading churches, high school, public library, hotel and railway station are in blocks facing or touching this central open space. While no one ever set down a general plan on paper, the good sense of the community managed to preserve and accentuate its exceptional beginnings. But probably the whole state does not present a second example even approximately as good. The same ratio would hold state after state for whole sections of the nation.

Recent Model Towns Usually Non-typical. The most perfectly planned American towns are those created within a few years by corporations employing expert engineers and scientific knowledge, and combining efficiency with ideals. In the main these are non-agricultural and essentially non-typical. Good examples are model towns of the United States Steel Corporation, or the notable achievement of the Sage Foundation at Forest Hills, L. I. Occasional real estate projects, chiefly in suburban areas, show the same excellencies; but America is almost without an example of a recent little town combining good plan with democracy. These model places were created by corporations or promoters, not by the collective intelligence and ideals of the people of communities. They do not often combine private ownership and enterprise with civic unity and beauty. And physical plan, however excellent, cannot have great community significance until it is really a democratic achievement.

Civic Architecture. Town planning opens new possibilities to American communities as well as to benevolent corporations. In its lowest terms it consists merely of designing and creating a logical and beautiful group of homes and business structures, with streets connecting them and leading out into the open country, as conveniently, economically, and attractively as possible in the light of the best knowledge and taste of our age. There must be a civic centre visibly expressing the spiritual unity of the community; around this the main institutions will be located. In location as well as in design and architecture the distinction between the principal and subordinate features will be everywhere maintained.

The average new town makes its Main Street wider than Fifth Avenue, and in general utterly disregards scale and proportion. Streets of model corporation-towns vary in width according to the use which will be given them. Some of the United States Steel Corporation plans call sixteen feet wide enough for most of the residence streets of the village. The average town dedicates three or four times as much space as this,—chiefly to weeds and mud. Along with, or if necessary in stead of, the formal park, is a centrally located community playground of ample size. So far as possible the entire town becomes a park by virtue of suitable home grounds, the proper planting of trees and such building restrictions as help to secure the largest possible open spaces everywhere. A first condition of a good plan is the provision of adequate public utilities, and a second, their control. They are now almost the chief foes of communal beauty. A colour scheme for the whole town is not thought impossible, carried out in the materials of surfacing the roadways, in the tinting of concrete sidewalks, of foliage and house painting. The main thoroughfares and gateways of the town, both from its residential portions to its civic centre, and from its outskirts to its country roads, are particularly designed and emphasized. Everywhere such natural beauty as exists is cherished and developed. Finally the entire town has become a work of art.

Spiritual Unity Through Proper Plan. The significance of this ideal is far more than aesthetic. A planless city gets to be impossible. It blocks its sidewalks with human bodies and makes its streets impassable with masses of goods, vehicles and people, vainly seeking



CIVIC CENTER OF FAIRFIELD, ALABAMA

to meet and pass without collision. It crushes, smothers and wrecks the nerves of its citizens. A planless little town does not thus literally turn and take its people by the throat; but it does them subtler wrong. Apart from the wear and waste of centuries of inconvenience from ill-planned streets and facilities, there are those terrific barriers to moral unity and those devices of class selfishness which physical sectionalism always seize upon. Being born across the tracks comes to be like being born blind or black. The simple accident of living in the less favoured part of town acts as a permanent handicap. As well belong in another world as live across the river! Thousands of Americans know this to their sorrow. On the other hand, a well-planned town with its civic centre, is both means and impulse to social integration, and to the realization of the common life of its people. Physical plan to the town is thus as fundamental as the skeleton to the human organism.

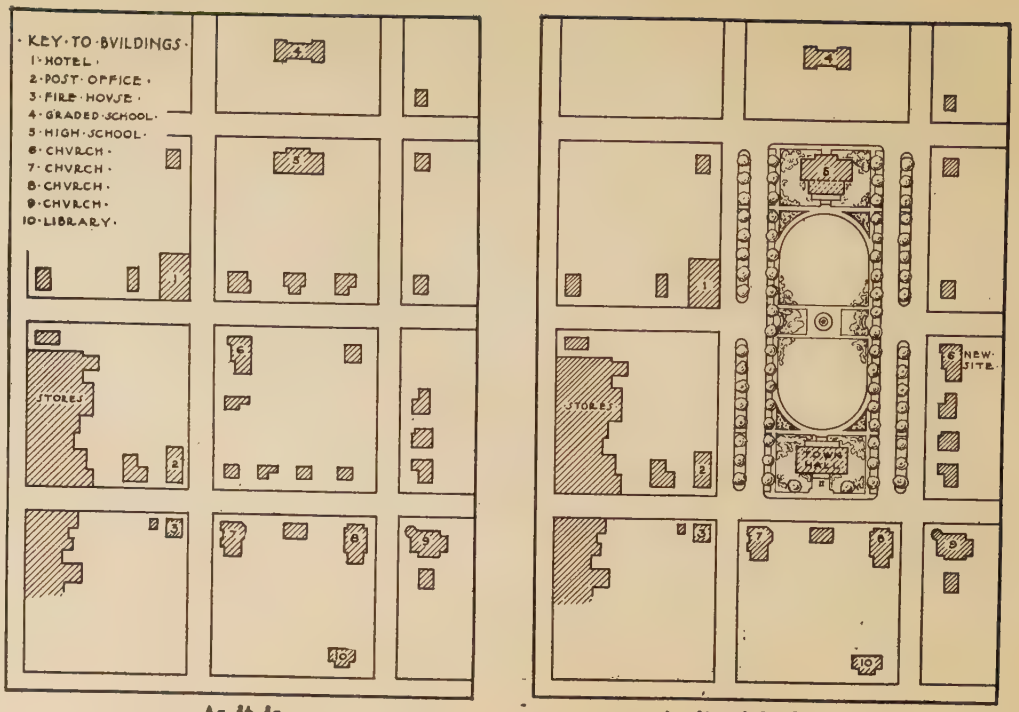
Directing the Inevitable. A city can afford to rebuild itself according to its ideals because of the enormous growth of its taxable property values. A little town can afford to rebuild itself because its property values generally do not increase. Its flimsy buildings are sure to go in half a century. Its roadways over much of the continent may at least be narrowed and tree-lined. The question is not whether the town shall re-erect itself, but whether it shall build planlessly the second time. With general prosperity and the rising standards of living, new buildings are springing up everywhere, particularly such public structures as schools, churches and town halls. A little foresight and radical action at the right time,—especially as the law

comes to authorize town-planning commissions—can gradually work over thousands of planless little towns into fairly unified and not unbeautiful condition. Thus a small Middle-Western community within the last fifteen years has erected its high school, public library, government building and three churches, and has done all its street improvement. At an unappreciable additional cost—perhaps $30,000—used to purchase a block and a half of land with nine dwellings and to move one church to a new site, this town may even now obtain a civic centre on which will face nine of its ten accidentally placed public buildings. In hundreds of communities it is not yet too late to take radical and far-reaching action, while almost every little town in America can decidedly improve itself by making the inevitable changes of its next quarter-century according to a definite plan.

THE TOWN'S ECONOMIC PLAN

It is possible for the little town to determine with something like scientific precision the nature and range of its economic possibilities. By considering its relations to the open country and the basis of its life in the soil, and other natural wealth, it has the means of discovering how large it is likely to get, what it should chiefly and permanently work at, and how much wealth its people may properly expect.

Knowledge is Partial. It must be confessed that only relative precision in these matters is possible. There is no escaping the adventure which inheres in life itself, and no guaranteeing of fulfilment even to the orderly dreams of men. Yet there is a large area of dependable information ready to be utilized.



As it is

As it might be

REPLANNING AN OLD TOWN

The extent of the soil which the little town occupies has already been determined by the land survey; the contours and physical features of the land by the geological survey; while there exists certain meteorological records, typical soil surveys, water supply investigations and the like which serve as a guide to the permanent values of the soil as a basis of sustenance and life. The various agricultural experiment stations have shown what can be done by the farmer. The timber and mineral resources have been surveyed. Private initiative has estimated the values of land and natural resources and the possibility of markets. Hundreds of men have tried the still more convincing experiment of making a living in various ways. It ought to be possible to strike a fair average between the optimists and pessimists, between the scientists and the "boosters" as to the economic possibilities of the community.

Knowledge vs. Impulsive Action. Instead of steadily using such knowledge as exists to suggest and control rational ventures and experiments, the average little town repeats an economic career consisting of successive exhibitions of mob-mindedness. Thus a comparatively staid Hoosier village recently studied in detail,[2] has a virtually unbroken record of collective economic folly for seventy-five years. It has never understood the dominant forces within which its destinies are involved and has always followed the wrong clues to progress. In its spasms of special enthusiasm it has never been clear headed. It has experienced two booms which burst and between them has always had an itching palm for unsubstantial gain and an open ear to the allurement of

[2] Sims, "A Hoosier Village," p. 27 f.

fake oil and mining stock or similar devices. Once it was victimized out of two hundred thousand dollars by a single lying insurance scheme. Within a few years it has suffered almost universal madness of investment in a factory which never opened. Time after time its collective capital has been dissipated and a sad number of individuals impoverished through its habitual economic folly. Not all towns are as bad as this one, but some are infinitely worse. Whenever their economic imagination is stirred it goes wild; this is the well established badge of the class. Even when their activities fall in with great economic movements they bear the marks of mind crazed and stampeded rather than of rational obedience to the probable. It means a complete reversal of habit for such communities to use exact or approximate knowledge when it exists.

Agricultural Resources. Broadly speaking three things are known about agriculture which are basic for the economic policy of the little town. First, agricultural experience, though gained in the expensive school of trial and failure, is always more right than wrong. It has determined the staple crops of any given area, and the fundamental methods of handling them. Their average value through a series of years is easily determinable. These staples may change but if they do, the change will be distributed through a rather prolonged cycle of time. Meanwhile novelties will naturally be adopted gradually, after being proved out by conservative experiments. Second, scientific agriculture provides the almost universal possibility of reasonable advance in profits through the improvement of existing types of farming and the gradual discovery and working out of exact

local adaptations, so that ultimately each area may be farming in what is, for it, the most advantageous way, considering all the factors involved. Scientific agriculture can perform miracles, but its general value to rural populations depends chiefly upon patience, common sense and the social virtues which blend in the community spirit. Third, land values and agricultural prices are likely to keep on rising and the farmer both to want and to be able to pay for increasing comforts and luxuries. Rural prosperity, on the whole, is certain but it will be modest both as to scale and rapidity. A share in this prosperity, proportionate to its essential services to the country, is the lower limit to what the little town ought rationally to expect.

Industrial Resources. For that majority of little towns which was created by agriculture, there is therefore a certain guarantee of modest good fortune along the line of least resistance. The case is far different when such towns try to add a second economic basis in industry. Few were directly created by industry, and the attempt to reach prosperity through acquired industries is attended with much risk. This would be inevitable in any venture involving so complete a break with former economic habits and outlook. It is doubly inevitable in that it means passing over to a sphere in which the chance of success is much more narrowly limited than in agriculture. The fields of agricultural prosperity spread out broadly; those of industry are narrow patches between smoking hillsides. Brigham summarizes the factors whose coincidence in a given place make it a likely industrial centre as follows: "the locality and origin of the raw material, the possibility of quick and cheap

transportation, the presence of power, the neighbourhood of supplementary materials, the resources of market, the supply of labour, the taxes and imposts of government, whether local, national, domestic or foreign, and also the business skill and inventive genius of the people."[3] Returning to the Hoosier village mentioned above, it is evident that it never possessed these advantages in sufficient number to warrant any expectation of becoming an industrial town. Especially does its case show the utter unfitness of a little-town population acting impulsively and *en masse*, to cope with the problems of industrial development. There is something pathetically splendid in the repeated industrial efforts and failures of small communities the continent over; and there has been a sufficient percentage of success to keep them trying. No one wants their economic resources to remain undeveloped. Yet in this day of massed capital, equipped with expert agents and all available knowledge, exploring the ends of the earth for economic openings, it is surely sane for the little town to wait for the development of its local resources upon movements sure to come in time, if and where there is anything worth coming for, all things considered. It is surely saner than for it to hazard its collective all in a realm of major risks in which it is inexpert and to which it is unequal. Local capital has its part to play, but the glory of failure should be reserved for individuals, not imposed upon whole towns by the action of the mob-mind. Meanwhile, the city is reaching out for the towns fast enough. Industry will succeed in them as fast as the urban régime, with its organization and

[3] "Commercial Geography," p. 98.

control of wealth, reaches them; but not much faster.

Commercial Resources. It is quite possible to discover the size and legitimate demands of the present trade area dependent upon the little town, and efficiently to express and minister to the advanced standard of living made possible by the new agriculture and the consequent improvement of farming and of rural society. A fairly definite statement is possible of what the little town ought to supply to the farmer who lives within its trade area. To be sure the case is not exactly simple. The average little town has not an exclusive area of dependent country. It has rivals, near and remote. The countryman today has alternatives, especially in the direction of trade in the city through the mail-order house. The growth of minor centres continually renders the retail business of many a little town superfluous. The increase in the number of retail merchants—over fifty per cent. in ten years—is probably more rapid than that of the purchasing power of the population, in spite of all its new and more luxurious demands. The possibility which is open to many a merchant and many a town is the possibility of death. Competition between towns apparently can be settled only by the survival of the fittest. As yet no effective application of public intelligence seems available as a substitute for trade war.

Better Merchandising. At the same time in all the older sections of the country, the little town may fairly estimate the amount of trade which it is able to hold and the margin within which it may increase its trade by enterprise and the service of new needs. Within itself, it can determine approximately the number of retail enterprises in each given line which can survive and

prosper. When it begs its people to "stick to our merchants" it ought to be able to give a defensible reason based on reasonably exact statistics of the needs and usefulness of its local enterprises. Popular opinion will speedily become decisive in favour of the enterprise which is really serving the people and which keeps abreast of the times. Flagrant waste in duplicatory overhead charges such as the maintenance of rival delivery wagons, has already been obviated in small progressive communities by the organization of joint delivery systems. Many of the lines of retail business, through trade journals, operate correspondence schools in the art of retail selling which enable the little-town merchant to rival the city in efficiency of organization and attractiveness of display. The University of Wisconsin through its extension department has been holding institutes especially intended to develop the latent possibilities of retail merchandising in small places. Commercial ideals and standards are quite within control of any community, through up to date and intelligent organization. Unquestionably the little-town merchant must brace up. The American people wish to have fun while they spend their money and they must be satisfied. This means that economic consumption has come to be dominated more largely by social ideals, and not by sheer necessity. Americans ought not to have to go outside of their immediate communities to find these ideals recognized and gratified.

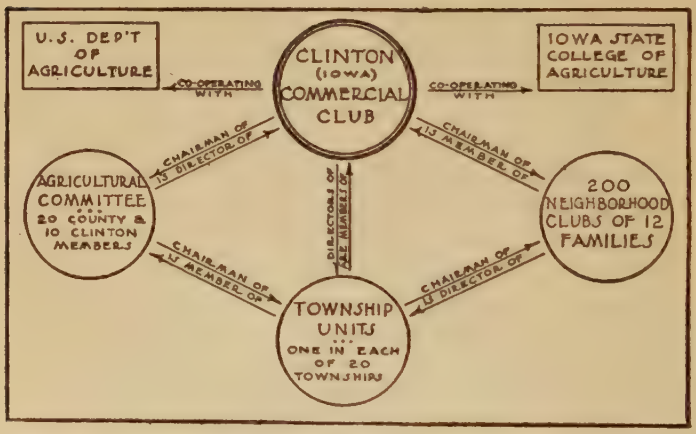
Standards and Technique of Commercial Organization. A commercial club or similar organization in a little town should take itself seriously and perform its functions upon the basis of scientific knowledge. That

will determine the lines of its efforts for publicity and promotion. Many a town is still suffering from the reaction which is sure to follow from inflated claims. Entire states might be mentioned which are cursed by stranded "soreheads" who have been lured to their borders by lying advertisements, but who remain as a permanently disgruntled element in the population. It is far better not to attract new enterprises than to attract failures. One hears of the agricultural department of a great state university protesting against the employment of bright graduates of its school of commerce to tell official falsehoods in behalf of officious towns. There is ultimate satisfaction in not only telling the truth but in knowing the truth and not fooling oneself. Notable improvement is taking place in the breed of commercial club secretaries and in the spirit of community advertisements. And in notable instances commercial organizations have discovered their own idealistic possibilities and become the agents of town improvement on the general and especially the finer sides. The rural Y.M.C.A. has been particularly successful in aligning some of these organizations with its plans for civic betterment.

Co-operation of Town and Country. Crucial in the plan of economic advancement is the inclusion of the farming population with the business men in some common organization. Clinton, Iowa, has been notably successful in bridging the gap of indifference between town and country by the promotion of agricultural intelligence and the development of the rural resources of its trade area.[4] It is not enough merely to instruct the farmer; instruction has been going on for a good while. It is

[4] Cubberley, "Rural Life and Education," 156.

the conscious identification of fortunes which is lacking. The thousand or so farm producers who occupy the trade area of the little town are as much parts of it as though they were operatives working in a factory within its borders. They must be recognized on this basis in economic organization. The farmer on his part is clannish, suspicious, and slow to include the town business man in his rural betterment movements. But somehow the


U.S. DEP'T OF AGRICULTURE
CO-OPERATING WITH
CLINTON (IOWA) COMMERCIAL CLUB
CO-OPERATING WITH
IOWA STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
CHAIRMAN OF 10 DIRECTOR OF
CHAIRMAN OF 10 MEMBER OF
AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE ... 20 COUNTY & 10 CLINTON MEMBERS
DIRECTORS OF ARE MEMBERS OF
200 NEIGHBORHOOD CLUBS OF 12 FAMILIES
CHAIRMAN OF 10 MEMBER OF
CHAIRMAN OF 10 DIRECTOR OF
TOWNSHIP UNITS ... ONE IN EACH OF 20 TOWNSHIPS

The Clinton Plan for Agricultural Betterment combining town and country into one unit.

leaders at least of the two groups must get together. This is the peculiar strength of the Clinton plan. It brings the country and townspeople into actual organized co-operation. The Commercial Club has a committee of thirty on agriculture; twenty of its members are farmers. This committee has organized the twenty contiguous townships and subdivided them into two hundred neighbourhood groups. The leaders of these town-

ship organizations and smaller groups become members of the Commercial Club. The Club officers in turn are members of the farmers' organizations. Clinton is a small city in size, but its method is directly available for the little town.

THE TOWN'S HEALTH PLAN

Through the adoption of definite standards of civic hygiene the little town may have what amounts to a health plan. It is certainly its duty to see that the massing of human lives in its limited area does not take additional toll of them in safety and health. No statistics exist which show exactly to what extent risk is added from contagion and contamination even in the smaller village community. The sanitation of the open country was bad enough, but the little town with the country's habits and without the city's remedies may easily be the most dangerous place of all. Certain minimum demands of the civilized conscience ought everywhere to be made the basis of collective life. First, an adequate and unimpeachable water supply; second, a method for the disposal of sewage and waste without soil contamination or the breeding of disease carriers; third, efficient fire protection, especially for life and property in the more congested centre of the town and the places of public resort; fourth, the proper lighting of public places, particularly of school buildings. All these requirements apply with particular force to the school building as housing the town's chief treasure. In all these matters nothing costs like failure to provide adequately for them.

Civic Hygiene. Stated concretely, the open well, the unmitigated privy, the manure pile, and alley rubbish

heap must go—in all towns. The right to have them must be regarded as a rural luxury. At these points town life must come definitely upon the communal basis. There are no individual rights in such matters. A community water supply both for domestic use and for fire protection is not only more sanitary but on the whole more economical than the multiplicity of individual wells with their pumps, repairs, and up-keep can possibly be. The incinerator or preparation of garbage for agricultural fertilization are available even for the little town, at surprisingly low cost. The septic tank or standardized and properly kept earth closet should be universally required for the individual home where a sewer system is not yet possible. Some method of inspection and of collective disposal of waste is inevitable. The United States Steel Corporation and similar agencies have shown how to bring efficiency with little cost even in transient mining towns of low grade population.

Economics of Sanitation. A thorough understanding of the economics of this whole field is fundamental to the community health plan. The apparently extravagant first cost of proper methods may frequently be demonstrated to be smaller than the cost of perpetuating existing unsanitary nuisances. So profoundly vital is this requirement of a health plan, that the state might well condition the privilege of incorporation upon the provision of standard methods for meeting the essential sanitary problems of a community. No body of people ought to be allowed to set up municipal housekeeping without the decencies of collective life.

THE TOWN'S MORAL PLAN

It is possible for the little town to have a moral plan, approximated through conscious standards of social control. As everywhere, human conduct is determined chiefly by the natural acquiescence of the human spirit in the ways of the social order into which it is born. In the main these ways satisfy the individual; even the rebel is too unoriginal to depart from them. Moral sentiment and social convention do most of their work without need of law or police.

Conflicting Traditions. The control of conduct through social tradition is, however, not so simple as the formula sounds; there are traditions rather than a tradition. Not only is there still a dash of frontier wildness surviving as lawlessness in the little towns of much of the country, but the little towns as a group are peopled largely by those who formerly lived in the country and who are still largely dominated by the countryman's point of view. In brief, they are incompletely socialized. Their people cling to country ways in spite of new environment. Thus in matters of sanitation, the maintenance of the barnyard manure pile is a sacred private right worth dying for, as a symbol of our liberties; or on the other hand, as the little town grows there come to be those who want to push on prematurely into city ways for the freedom of which they contend as martyrs to new light. In short the struggle is always on between existing conditions and advancement. Now, any group of people which is distinctively at outs with environment presents a serious moral problem. Just as the spirit of youth is inevitably

at war with the necessary limitations of the city streets, so the rural mind is at war with little-town conditions. Hence the necessity of vigorous moral control in order to conform the individual to the requirements of collective life.

Social Control a Reality. The minor struggle between traditions, the give and take of moral sentiments in search of equilibrium, the clash between temperaments, ages and views of life will go on normally for ever. But no community can do anything in the direction of its ideals till the fact and main tendencies of social control are settled. The little town may as well face its battle and have it over. The necessary ordinances of safety and decency are to be obeyed. Pigs and poultry will be the most frequent issue. Their economic value under town conditions must first be determined. If it is best to keep them at all, the whole wearying round of issues must be pursued—agitation, education, a contest in local politics, a suit at law or two, a clash at wills and of personal sentiments all along the line.

Pedagogy of Law Enforcement. While all moral battles must be waged on every front at once, it is possible to discern a sort of pedagogical order in which the offensive should be undertaken. It would be foolish to make the first issue that of closing cigar stands on Sunday, which at best would only stir the conscience of a fraction of the community, or that of enforcing liquor laws, which always involves a contest with formidable interests from outside the community. Rather the battle should be drawn on some community issue pure and

simple, in which the enforcing of the collective against the individualistic viewpoint involves some broadly fundamental but localized field. When the battle is fought to a finish here other victories will come more easily.

Influence of Alien Commercial Interests. The most difficult yet necessary phases of the little town's struggle for moral standards are those involving outside interests not directly amenable to the community conscience. They are often said to "interfere" with the community; if so they must be made to interfere helpfully as well as harmfully. The most frequent and insidious of these interests is the organized liquor traffic, although often the interests of alien corporations clash with those of the community and interfere in a similar way. In these cases the essential nature of the problem is that it is not local in character. Local tools are used, but the principals to the conflict are too remote to feel local pressure. Under such circumstances the only resource of the little town is to combine with other communities using the resources of state-wide publicity, organization and political action. The unromantic, perpetual, straight-away pull of law-enforcement with all it costs in time, money and personal discomfort, is the inevitable price of community morals in their wider setting.

Standardized Social Customs. Even more difficult than law enforcement, but affecting more people in more ways and entering more subtly into community life, are the problems of social control in the round of social intercourse; of amusements, particularly for youth; the

problems of standards of consumption registered by the expenditure of money, and of the use of leisure. The concrete forms in which these issues confront the little town are the party, the dance, theatre and amusement place; dress, travel, Sunday observance and the like.

The Social Referendum. Probably the most rational method of precipitating a body of agreements in these debatable fields is that of the voluntary referendum, which has been tried out in a number of communities. It is proposed usually by the federation of women's organizations and consists simply in a systematic canvass of the most influential and earnest members of all classes and tendencies in the community, to see what they think the reasonable standards for "our town" are. At what hour should the parties of high school young people close? How many times a week should growing boys and girls be away from home at night? What is a reasonable scale of entertainment at club functions? How much should the cost of graduating dress and attending functions be? What are the reasonable terms of social association between adolescents of the two sexes? When the results of such questions are generalized and announced a considerable range of choice is still open, but weak-kneed parents are strengthened to enforce some kind of a standard. It is easier for the poorer hostess not to spend more than she should. The ultra-puritanical are restrained and the way to rational agreements is open. Surely this is better than the eternal anxiety of the little town as to what is right and proper in social matters, the harsh judgments of the stricter upon the less strict, the internal difficulties by which a man's foes are often they of his own house-

hold. "Spoon River" is a most realistic picture of tragic possibilities on this point.

In some such ways as the above the steadying force of social standards may be thus vitally evolved without hardening into unyielding, clashing and non-progressive traditions.

Foundation vs. Structure. So far the discussion has concerned the logical fundamentals of little-town betterment. It is quite another thing to make a constructive program of social advance. All merely formal directions, and especially negative ones for the control of life, will and ought to fail. The most vitalizing possibility of the little town is that of having a positive program secured by the continuous activities of the institutions of education and service, and by the direct pursuit of wholesome ideals by individuals. One who sees life steadily and sees it whole will not attempt to deal compulsorily with structural fundamentals without at the same time creating an atmosphere in which wholesome community choices may take place. He will not dare to specialize on law enforcement until he has created the playground and appreciated the spiritual aspects of recreation. He will not attempt to make social standards for his fellows except as he can prevent a vision of normal life compelling in its attractiveness. But on the other hand, and equally, the most idealistic and spontaneous community movements will wander far without a well planned physical basis of town life; without a well ordered economic program through which people can win a livelihood and pay the cost of their collective enterprises; without a firm basis in human health through the facilities of public safety and sanitation;

and without a substantial though flexible moral framework within which individual destinies may be wrought out. On these greatest civic commandments hang all the law and the prophets of community welfare.

VI

THE TOWN'S POSSIBILITIES: INSTITUTIONS

No possibility of the little town is so obviously promising as that of improving its existing institutions in the light of modern ideals and standards of social service and efficiency. Plenty of fragmentary and disconnected movements in this direction are already under way. It is a poor town indeed which is not doing something in the direction of better homes, better schools, better churches and better civic agencies.

BETTER HOMES

The Town's Homes. The home has a fundamental civic significance. It is a private concern, but it is also a public institution established by law; and it is easily the chief social agency of civilization. In the little town particularly, many social functions for which the city evolves separate institutions, are still performed by the home. More than elsewhere therefore, its civic aspect rivals its domestic aspect in importance. Thus the home of Donald and Dorothea is the sanctuary of the Smith family, but the homes of Littleton, collectively considered, are the chief environment of the next generation. As such they are Littleton's chief concern. The health, the education (especially on its play side), the taste, the reverence of the whole town during the next fifty years are in the keeping of the home of to-

day. The home is also still the largest factor in the environment of youth, however youth may seek wider fields. Beside this, it performs the fundamental social functions of feeding and lodging the bulk of the adult population and caring for its occasional ailments, as well as providing for the aged in weakness and decrepitude. In brief it is the kindergarten, the playground, the high school fraternity, the hotel and restaurant, the playhouse, hospital and old people's home of the little town. In these capacities it is incumbent upon the little-town home to acquire a most serious attitude towards civic interests and to secure the most progressive and educative methods of self-improvement. Through the school, more immediately through the voluntary organization of women, and rarely of men, its better possibilities are most likely to be advanced. Placed on the background of community responsibility, motherhood and home-making acquire new dignity. The supplementary agencies which give an equal chance to the child of the less favoured home, and especially to those of alien speech or despised race, are also necessary in the little town and constitute a fundamental department of its community service. Chief of them are the social centre and its adjuncts,—the neighbourhood playground, the story-hour and the teaching of gardening and elementary handicraft. The Noroton (Conn.) garden city for children is an excellent example of the extension of the home spirit to the neediest elements of the community.[1]

Economic Significance. Again, the home is the little town's most important agent of economic production.

[1] *American City*, X, p. 161.

In the large it is the farm which produces,—the town buys and sells; but even the town has its home garden with its allies or enemies—the cow and the chickens. They supplement not inconsiderably the townsman's income, besides being good for his health and rural sympathies. The H. C. Frick Coke Company in awarding prizes on the six thousand six hundred and thirty-three vegetable gardens kept by its mill hands, estimated the total value at $142,536.20, an average of $21.48 per garden.

The Home an Industrial Enterprise. Still more significant is the economic function of the kitchen and wash tub. Every misapplication of human energy is challenged by the awakening social consciousness, and these are flagrant spheres of such misapplication. It is of the highest importance to the American nation and its civilization, that the domestic tools of the little town become modernly effective. Many a sympathetic voice vibrates for the farmer's wife now-a-days, still toting water for her wash and turning her wringer by hand, when her husband has running water for the stock, and a gasoline engine for the barn. The housewife of Littleton is under an equal handicap. "Downtown" has its plumbing, its electricity, its gas, and the commercial club boasts that Littleton "has" these facilities; while as a previous paragraph discovers, they are ordinarily not available for the majority of homes. Their first cost frightens the poor even when it is not utterly impossible. Collective responsibility should therefore intervene by public ownership or otherwise, providing opportunity for payment for such facilities in instalments at low interest. Frequently ordinary business

intelligence on the part of local utility companies would largely solve the problem. Apparently they have given almost no attention to efficiency in merchandising their services. During many years spent in little towns, the author can remember but one occasion of real enterprise in this direction. It took many years for a privately-owned electric light plant in an Iowa town of few industries to realize the waste of allowing an expensive investment to lie idle during the hours of daylight. It costs but little more to turn the wheels throughout the day and to furnish electricity for cooking and ironing during prescribed hours at lower rates. This policy has filled the town homes with labour-saving electric appliances. The municipal lighting plant at Independence, Mo.—a small city—has a similar notable record. It supplies over four-fifths of its homes and sells electricity for light at seven cents per kilowatt hour and for cooking at three cents. Even when the general extension of modern improvements is beyond little-town possibilities, beginnings may still be made. So vital is the conservation of human energy to its higher uses, that no educator, social reformer or spiritual leader need find it beneath his dignity to initiate a movement for extending sewers or for municipal water or light. Efficient civilization is an idle word so long as its benefits pass by the average American home. At this point the little town has common cause with the home of the open country.

Home and Neighbourhood. Homes occupy most of the area of the little town and constitute the chief visual environment which so largely dominates life. What goes on behind their doors is of indirect concern, but

their front-yard and their back-yard doings, with the total picture and impression of the town's streets lined with homes, are shared perforce by the whole community. These shared, external aspects of the home depend chiefly for their finer possibilities upon the development of community taste in lawns, shrubbery, tree planting, home gardens, domestic architecture and refined colour sense. For most of the community, imitation will chiefly govern in such matters. The crucial point therefore is the starting of a few good examples. Their imitation should then be stimulated by community garden competitions, with prizes offered for excellence in the keeping of home gardens and grounds of various sizes.

Civic Beauty. Rivalry in the beautification of the home as well as in productive gardening may be made one of the most joyous aspects of little-town life. Art study, as now standardized for the better high schools, includes the elementary principles of landscape gardening and of domestic and civic architecture. Interest in these matters is popularized by a host of magazines; and one rejoices in the growth of American taste until much travel gives him ocular demonstration that the majority of American little towns are still utterly untouched by the hand of beauty. In the matter of domestic architecture the worst, on the whole, is between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi. Here fashions were set after the good old Colonial traditions had run out and before new ideals had arisen to take their place. Toward the West improvement begins. Dakota has better domestic architecture than Illinois, and Montana than Dakota. The bungalows of the Pacific Coast are as good in their way as the village homes of New Eng-

land, and the town dwellings of the Colonial South and Middle States. Throughout the continent, trees happily redeem many a town from utter ugliness, but they even have been planted tastelessly, as wind-breaks rather than as trees. They were largely of the quick-growing and short-lived varieties. Civic landscape requires a patient and appreciative sympathy for naturalness and harmony in tree forms, which is pained at overcrowding and the mingling of incongruous species. The vicious hacking of trees by electric light corporations or professional trimmers is a most flagrant sin. Even when formal pretence at professional landscaping is made, the virtues of simple planting, restrained colour schemes and the predominant use of native material are rare. A jury of real artists were moved to inextinguishable laughter at the expensive landscape gardening of one of New York's most pretentious suburbs; they derided its clipped shrubbery as so many "apple dumplings." Taste is not cheaply won even now when the landscape fashion plates compete with fashions in dress on the pages of popular magazines. In this realm, modesty is the superlative virtue, and of this virtue the little town has almost everything to learn. Yet perhaps nowhere would the conquest of sham and pretence, the achievement of essential proportion in life, and the dignified acceptance of the little-town lot be so effectively registered as in domestic architecture and in the setting of trees. They make or mar the peculiar atmosphere and charm of the village community.

Home and Social Life. The home is the chief medium of social intercourse in the little town. The club house is exceptional, the hotel dinner for the entertain-

ment of guests rare. Even the ladies' parlour in the church is not generally adequate for the sewing and missionary society, nor regularly heated in winter. Churches indeed afford some housing to their organizations, and the lodges have their halls; yet for the most part, meetings, entertainments, parties and dances, which constitute the chief stream of social life, are held from house to house. This inclusion of society within home walls largely identifies social standards with home standards, and gives the home compelling advantage in the process of social control as described in the last chapter. The mistresses of the home are the censors and leaders alike in the social field, and the better and the worst are in their hands. When social life reaches the club-house stage, as in the city, it is taken for granted that it will be regularly planned and organized. Plan and organization are equally necessary, while it remains in the house-to-house stage. A constructive attitude toward social activities in the little town will mitigate and largely remove most of its evils of flashiness, snobbery and the cheap aping of city ways.

BETTER SCHOOLS

The second great institutional possibility of the little town is school improvement. This must be both intensive, pertaining to the school's spirit, internal organization and methods; and extensive, expressing its outreach into the life of the community.

Adaptation to Childhood and Youth. Avoiding pedagogical technicalities, the short way of stating the new life and spirit which has come over the American school is to say that it is based in a better appreciation

of child life. This involves not only the adaptation of school methods to the natural stages of human development—infancy, childhood and youth, with their crises and minor phases—but particularly the recognition of a multitude of interests and incentives not recognized in the older school practice. "If the school must choose between schoolhouse and playground," says Dr. Woods Hutchinson, "let it choose the playground." Even the smallest school should in its measure minister to the entire life of its pupils in each stage of their expanding powers.

Vocational Definiteness. The second great field of the internal improvement of school life is its growing vocational definiteness. This is the strong point of the rural-life educational propaganda. It proposes to teach country boys not only in the terms of country life, but largely through its experiences, giving the school the visible environment which education is to interpret, and making better farming the test of its educational success.

A School Program for the Little Town. The school program of the little town is all this and more. The insistence of this book upon the essential identity of the interests of the small centre and open country, enables it enthusiastically to agree that the town high school should have its ample garden plots, its orchard, barns and stock, and if possible, its small farm. In the smaller village it is possible to have these newer school facilities in immediate conjunction with the school building. In the larger little-town, the physical difficulties are greater but the resources are also better, and the problem of distance must be met by some arrangement for the trans-

portation of pupils. The farm with its various branches of agriculture and its kitchens and shops is not an adjunct of the school but a vital centre of the essential school process. It is through these activities that the most convincing teaching is secured.[2] But the little town's school cannot stop here. Its vocational adaptation must extend to all its people. It must train those who are to buy from and sell to the farmers. Nothing can be better for the future merchants and professional men than to be educated in the closest sympathy with rural life; but the technical demands of their vocations must also be met. Furthermore, as has been previously urged, the little town is bound to have a surplus population, for which neither it nor its surrounding country has room. Its education must furnish scope and outlook also to its young people who will go and ought to go to the city. Many of them will go by way of college and the professional school, and necessary preparations for these institutions must be provided. Thus three perfectly definite vocational emphases are necessary. The well-balanced school of a little town will provide all three. The educational systems of the most progressive states already make this possible, and state agencies and subsidies are available in many of them, especially for the agricultural adaptation of education.

Community Service. In its outreach toward the community, the school must extend itself to match the entire geographical community and to serve all ages and all classes of its people. How these demands may be met on a modest scale appears in the case of a small Wisconsin high school as summarized in a Bulletin of

[2] Cubberley, "Rural Life and Education," p. 278 f.

the State University. "In 1906 a literary society was organized among the alumni of the high school at Sauk City, an incorporated village of 900 people, with meetings attended by the students and a few adults. This grew into a vigorous meeting, by the assistance of the school teachers, held every two weeks, with programs filled with 'everybody that could talk, sing, play, or dance.' This became a platform for the coming out of anybody who was found to have a special gift. Feature programs were popular. The 'German program' was a great success. Then 'outside' speakers were introduced. Concerts were given. Some money was made and 'things began to be done.' At this point the literary society was transformed into 'The Sauk City Social Center,' and the organization largely officered by the business men." The recent community activities of the school are outlined as follows: a lecture course, the school board assisting financially; a series of cooking lessons and demonstrations for the women of the community, attended by from fifty to seventy-five varying in ages from sixteen to sixty years; a play centre, made possible by an appropriation of $100 for playground apparatus; literary society meetings, continued as at the beginning; a community institute, held in co-operation with the Extension Division of the University of Wisconsin, and consisting of a four-day school particularly on the problems of public health and recreation with reference to village and farm homes. This institute was conducted by University professors and state specialists at a cost of $225, and was largely attended by farmers from within a radius of ten miles. The Sauk City school claims the following definite results from its ex-

tension work; (1) creation of a community consciousness; (2) street improvement; (3) a clean-up day; (4) certain dubious practices in village halted; (5) Memorial Day rehabilitated; (6) a woman's club formed to aid the "Social Centre" enterprises.[3]

Community Service on a Larger Scale. An aggressive town high school reports that its plant and facilities have been put at the service of eight voluntary social agencies of the community. Organizations for charity, health, music culture and civic improvement have their headquarters in its building. It houses a community library and is the civic hall for popular entertainments and community business. It summarizes distinct civic gains through its initiative within the last five years as follows: the landscaping of the cemetery; the campaign for painting the houses of the community according to a unified colour scheme worked out by the art department of the high school; a new park and band house; paving and anti-tuberculosis movements; and the initiation of campaigns for playgrounds and for a system of municipal garbage collection.

Schools for Special Classes of the Population. Beside such varied non-scholastic service of the community, the little town cannot escape its measure of the necessity which impels the city to provide so extensive and appealing an array of schools for special classes of the population,—continuation and vocational schools for child labourers, classes for teaching English to adult foreigners, out-of-door schools for tubercular children, and special instruction for retarded, delinquent and other atypical pupils. The larger little town, at least,

[3] Wisconsin Bulletin No. 234, pp. 13–14.

may have some simple form of continuation school for children who drop out prematurely to go to work. It may do something for its illiterate adults. Within a few years the "Moonlight School" movement which opened the school doors principally to their large population of belated white citizens, has run like wildfire over the Southern states, and brought motley scores and hundreds of seamed and soiled workers to first acquaintance with the primer and spelling book. Nothing more romantic and pathetic has broken upon the educational world since the first thronging of contraband slaves to the Freedmen's schools at the close of the Civil War. As to atypical children, their relatively small numbers and the simplicity of little-town conditions permit individual attention to all but the more flagrant cases,—and these require the care and expert handling of a state institution.

The Town School and the Larger Community. Of course, in the light of previous study of the community as composed of town centre and surrounding and dependent rural area, even a good town school is not fully good unless it is somehow effectively related to all the people of all the larger community. Recent movements of educational reorganization which make this increasingly possible, are elaborated in another connection.

BETTER CHURCHES

The little town can have better churches. Like the schools, they need internal reorganization,—and they must have social redirection in order to render effective community service.

Simplification and Correlation. The church of

twenty-five years ago inherited a venerable and relatively simple set of traditional activities,—preaching services, revivals and prayer meetings; the Sunday School and two or three alternatives in children's organizations,—mission or temperance bands or Bands of Mercy; the "Aid Society" or some such association of women for friendliness, finance and philanthropy. Since that day, the religious world has fairly staggered under the multiplicity and rapid succession of new ideas and devices. The Sunday School has become graded. Church architecture has evolved to at least a third stage. The Cadets have yielded to the Knights, the Knights to the Scouts and the athletic team. Budget and financial systems have been created. These all are social inventions attempting to adjust religious methods to the natural unfolding of human powers and interests, and to the modern impulse for efficiency. The genetic viewpoint has given a new psychology to school and church alike. Each has consequently a new pedagogy with a train of experimental methods and organizations. In the school it has given rise to acute problems of correlation, of the adjustment of the new to the old, of internal reorganization. In the church identical causes necessarily created essentially like problems. The local parish at first imitatively adopted one novel scheme and device after another. They culminated in an aggregation and clutter of imperfectly related organizations and movements which clogged the wheels of church work in the smaller communities. Next the demand for efficiency intervened, and sought again to sense the primary aims of the church, to reduce the perplexing variety of new agencies to system around a few central ideals,

to standardize the new methods and reduce them to scale so as to fit communities of different sizes and types. Finally, there has emerged, in fairly clear outline, the concrete picture of a good town church.

The Modern Sunday School. Such a church must take itself seriously as an agency of religious education. As a social institution it has a continuous educational function to perform with respect to the children of the community. Generation after generation will receive or fail to receive an essential part of their culture and moral outfitting just in proportion as the church is faithful and efficient at this task. It is a task with a highly technical aspect, yet one which the resources of the little town can master. Virtually all the problems of the modern Sunday School have now been sifted and re-formulated within the little-town scale of accomplishment. The more progressive denominations have set forth standards of excellence and grant recognition to schools in proportion as they are realized. Some attempt to assign precise values to the different elements of a successful school, as in the following example:

THE PILGRIM STANDARD—MISSOURI EDITION

"That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

I.	Educational Committee To supervise and correlate the educational work of the church.		6%
II.	Attendance		20%
	Membership—20% increase	6%	

	Average attendance—15% increase	8%	
	Average attendance—75% of membership	6%	
III.	Church Attendance		10%
	Should be 65% of the membership of the Sunday School above the First year Primary.		
IV.	Organization		10%
	Pupils Graded, i.e., grouped in yearly grades, and in classes which form natural units	2%	
	Departments; Grades grouped in Departments, viz., Beginners, Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior, Adult, Extension Departments; Cradle Roll and Home Department	3%	
	Annual Promotion from grade to grade, graduation into Senior or Adult Departments upon completion of a required course of study	1%	
	Organized classes. See organized Class Literature	3%	
	Complete and permanent records of the school and of each pupil	1%	
V.	Administration		10%
	Work of school unified under		
	(a) Executive Head	2%	
	(b) Head of Instruction	2%	
	(c) Heads of Departments	2%	
	A teacher for each class or grade	2%	
	Workers' Conferences regularly held	2%	
VI.	Instruction		14%
	Graded Lessons, including	9%	
	(a) Instruction in Temperance	2%	
	(b) In Missions	3%	
	And in each case adapted to the grades.		

VII.	Training		10%
	In service, a program for putting the truth into life including religious habits, personal work, social service	5%	
	In worship, a program for training in worship, including suitable material, a reverent atmosphere, and acts of worship	5%	
VIII.	Teacher Training		10%
	For those who are teaching and those who are preparing to teach either in Normal classes, or by some form of individual work.		
IX.	Equipment		5%
	Class rooms or allotted spaces for each class and department	1%	
	Teachers' Libraries	2%	
	Suitable chairs, tables, blackboards, Bibles, sand-tables, also pictures, maps, models, stereographs	2%	
X.	Benevolence		5%
	Including a contribution to each of the seven (or eight) societies.		
	Total		100%

An effective school leads its pupils to Jesus Christ, and into the membership of the church.

Going beyond the ordinary Sunday School hours, typical little-town conditions are exceptionally favourable for the enlarged work of the church in religious education. Considerable numbers of the people, especially of women, have relative leisure; homogeneity of population is the rule; there is ordinarily a tradition favourable to religion. These conditions would enable

the churches of smaller communities to make good use of week day opportunity for religious instruction as afforded by the Gary plan. Except for their general laxness with respect to all institutions the little town might easily have the most effective Sunday Schools in America. It is significant that already in states where such towns are most influential, the tendency to give public school credit for standardized Bible study under church auspices has gone farthest.

Internal Unification of the Local Church. A second marked advance of internal reorganization is reached by integrating all parish activities within one program, and especially by grouping all its organizations about the Sunday School as the centre. This follows from the fact that the Sunday School is already the broadest and soundest phase of church life. It is organized in harmony with the laws of human nature as it unfolds in childhood, youth and manhood, and thus contains the principle of organization for the whole range of church interests. It concerns the deepest things of life. Naturally, therefore, it is the proper centre for all types of minor organization which the broadening interests of the age have developed. Such a plan of internal unification is the remedy for the two chief organic weaknesses particularly of the little town church. On the one hand it has been a victim of personal selfishness which frequently held the major church officers, the prayer meeting, sewing circle and peculiarly the choir, in the perpetual possession of some family or petty clique, and kept them in high-handed independence of the church of which they were supposed to be part. This is prevented by compelling all organizations to be-

come parts of one enterprise. Such a plan solves at the same time the embarrassment caused by so many new organizations—the religious fads of the moment. Each as it appears finds room for itself within the comprehensive framework of existing organizations. Thus the Boy Scout Movement has very largely been received within the life of the churches—especially the smaller ones—as an adjunct of the Sunday School. In its complete development, the ideal of parochial organization would be to include in one progressive, pedagogic, efficient, and above all one vital and interesting process, all the interests of all its members all of the time. Organizations of childhood, youth and adulthood, both for men and women, would be distinct yet would all function together. The wide-spread effort toward this ideal is the most outstanding phenomenon of internal reconstruction in the modern church.

Standardizing the Local Church. So definite and so generally accepted is this movement that denominational bodies here and there are setting forth standards of excellence for local parishes which for precision and detail make a new epoch in religious life. A good church is set forth in concrete description just as the functions and proportions of an ideal human body might be. One can see what each part is for and how they are related to one another. Effective machinery urges approved methods upon the local church; comprehensive organization brings them home to the remotest community. Particularly is the part of each local church in the world-wide enterprise of Christian missions reduced to precise definition. Virtually every important Protestant denomination now has its "apportionment plan" for benev-

olence, whereby the total denominational aim is divided and subdivided until the share of the local congregation is reached. Then the standardized "every member canvass" seeks to reach the last individual with his financial responsibility. Much of the identical talent which mobilizes and controls the great industries and commercial activities of the nation has been made available in behalf of church efficiency. As applied to the church of the little town, these sharply efficient methods are the necessary corrective of the ultra-personal attitude toward life and the essential contempt for institutions which the analysis of little-town character revealed. Those who decry machinery, fail to understand what tremendous vitality of motive must have been necessary to get matters so far along anywhere in so conservative an institution as the church. They say well who insist that it will require a mighty spirit within the wheels before they revolve effectively in the average little town. The possibility, however, is clearly in view today.

Community Outreach. The problem of the modern church is to furnish social leadership and to become, in its institutional life and physical facilities, a social centre without the loss of any of its ancient graces, strength and glory. It is already one of the larger educational and recreational resources of considerable groups of the people of the average little town and it needs to perfect its service in these respects and to extend it to the entire community.

The One-church Community. Manifestly this service is easiest of realization when there is but one church in a community. Not only are such churches without sectarian rivals, but there is no other institution to com-

pete with them. When it is recalled that half of the entire little-town group have populations of five hundred inhabitants or less, the immense opportunity of the church as a social centre will be realized. Statistical evidence re-enforces the case. The larger denominations of the State of Vermont are giving sixty per cent. of their missionary aid to churches which stand alone and without rivals in their communities. For the country at large, no one has counted the number of these incomplete civic centres, each with its single neighbourhood church. The modest social service which some of these churches report becomes conspicuous only when it is remembered that anything done in a community of that size must necessarily be modest, and farther that through traditionalism, many of them do not feel that it is part of religious service to do such things at all. The Free Baptist church at Honey Creek, Wis., for example, has erected a people's hall adjoining its house of worship. The Ladies' Aid Society of that church raised one thousand dollars of its cost, the remainder being secured by popular subscription. Then the community vote put the control of the enterprise into the hands of the church trustees. It reports the following activities: Ladies' meetings,—an "Aid Society" gathering women from a hundred farm homes twice a month for a day of sewing and sociability; a winter course of lectures and entertainments under a standard bureau; local talent entertainments, including dramatics; free use of the hall for charitable purposes; rental of hall for other wholesome community interests; farmers' institute gatherings.[4] The author's first pastorate was in a one-church com-

[4] Wisconsin Bulletin No. 234, pp. 26–27.

munity in which the social interests of all the people have been identical with their church life from the beginning. The plain white meeting house has long since given way to a commodious modern structure but remains in use as the community hall for entertainments and social life of the youth. Such a program is easily within the power of any village with but a single church, and is notable only because there are village churches by the thousands with no glimmer of consciousness that anything of the sort is to be expected of them.

The Church of the Socially-Minded. Except for the added weight which it has to carry by reason of others' inertia, the case is similar with the town which has but one live church. Human partisanship may question as to what constitutes a live church and which of two or more candidates shall be recognized as such. In a Minnesota instance, the business men forced the issue and compelled a community referendum as to which of rival churches was to survive,—then united in its support and ignored the other. Where inertia and traditionalism are intrenched it will not do to let the community suffer indefinitely. Some one church must see the vision and point the way, gathering to its support all the socially-minded elements of populations. Such is the church at Wibaux, Mont., which dedicated in 1914 a community parish house open to all residents of the town and managed by a board of representative directors. It offers a wide range of community features; reading room, game room, rest and comfort rooms for country people; also a gymnasium and baths available under proper regulation for men, women and children. Boys' athletics, the various activities of voluntary clubs, and

community amusement and educational features are carried on. Thus in a frontier community the best modern possibilities of the church are being realized almost from the start. A farmers' institute and a business men's banquet were held in connection with the dedication of the community house, thus expressing this church's interest both in town and open country. The scope and vigour of its ideals speak still more exaltedly in the words of its service of dedication which constitute a sort of classic of the social spirit of religion:

Minister:—To the glory of God, our Father, by whose favour we have built this house; To the honour of Jesus, the Christ, our Lord and Saviour; To the praise of the Holy Spirit, source of life and light;

Congregation:—We dedicate this house.

Minister:—With the prayer that this building may ever stand for the great things of the Kingdom of God, a testimony to the grace and glory of the Gospel of Christ, a centre of holy life and humane service to all needy lives of this community.

Congregation:—We dedicate this house.

Minister:—That it may minister to the betterment of the home, to the protection of childhood, to the purity of boyhood, to the modesty of maidenhood, to the holiness of womanhood, to the nobleness of manhood.

Congregation:—We dedicate this house.

Minister:—For the fraternal union of all people in this community, for the nurture of a closer Christian fellowship among all classes and conditions of men, women and children who shall meet here; Children of one God, bound together in the same commonwealth, makers of one divine democracy,

Congregation:—We dedicate this house.

Minister:—For the cultivation of a truly Christian social life in the community, for the promotion of a human brotherhood based on the divine Fatherhood, for the utilization of everything in art and literature that elevate and refine and sweeten human life,

Congregation:—We dedicate this house.

Minister:—For the enlightenment of the mind, for the education of the conscience, for the salvation of the life, for the perfecting of our whole being, body, mind and soul,

Congregation:—We dedicate this house.

The Over-Churched Community. Towns which ought to have but one church and are afflicted with more now have an appeal to the resources of interdenominational co-operation which are strikingly developing.[5] Matters may be mended by one of the several eliminating methods now current. The oldest method was that of the union church, uniting Christians of all branches locally, but itself belonging to no denomination. Such churches became so numerous in Massachusetts that they began to meet together for mutual profit and satisfaction, and bade fair to become just another denomination. It is agreed by most of those seeking to mitigate denominationalism that the union church is not the best way. The second method is that of local federation whereby two or more congregations come together in one organization with common place of worship and under one pastor, at the same time maintaining the corporate identity and denominational allegiance of each. In such cases their benevolent funds are usually divided between

[5] See *Christian Unity at Work*, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1913; Douglass, *The New Home Missions*, Ch. VII; *Statement of Principles, etc.*, Home Missions Council of Western Washington, 323 New York Block, Seattle, Wash.

the different denominations. Sometimes a pastorate of limited tenure has been devised, so as to assure rotation in office between ministers of the different federated faiths.

Denominationalism Without Its Evils. By far the strongest tendency now-a-days, however, is the exchange of fields between the denominations, so that over-churched communities are relieved, and at the same time the remaining church of each stands in full and normal denominational fellowship with some one group of believers. Many hundreds of such "swaps" have taken place between denominations within the last five years. The union church is either an orphan or else tends to become simply an additional denomination; the federated church is a hybrid, and lacks in normal vitality; but the denominational church which is created by the mutual surrender of fields leaves a local congregation in unimpaired relation to some distinct and effective body of Christians organized for the world-wide work of missions, and committed to the support of great social projects. Vast interests are in the hands of the progressive denominations. Yet there is no denomination left which is not thoroughly mixed as to membership. The constituency of all of them is composed of people formerly connected with dozens of different denominations. Matters of theology and church policy are less divisive than formerly. There is no reason why effective ecclesiastical machinery should not redivide large areas of country between the denominations, thus eliminating duplication and adding strength to each.

The Larger Parish. A capital case of this tendency

is that of Benzie County, Michigan, where half the county, constituting a natural social unit with a little town at its centre, has been unified under the religious leadership of the Benzonia Congregational Church. Happy exchanges for more strategic points removed two Methodist churches from the district. The Benzonia community has come not only to a sense of commercial affiliation, but to one of religious responsibility for leadership in its tributary area. There is a staff of pastors serving the four organized Congregational churches under a unified administration, and eight other regular places of religious and social service are maintained largely through the voluntary activities of laymen of the church. The activities of this "larger parish" are outlined by the pastor, Rev. H. S. Mills, as follows:

1. Benzonia Village, Benzonia Township. Church Organization, Church Building, Morning Service every Sunday. Sunday School, Christian Endeavour Society, Woman's Missionary Society, Weekly Prayer Meeting, Ladies' Aid Society.

2. Beulah Village, Benzonia Township. Chapel. Evening Service every Sunday, Sunday School, Ladies' Aid Society.

3. Eden, Benzonia Township. Church Organization, Schoolhouse (Chapel, 1914). Evening Service every Sunday, Sunday School, Christian Endeavour Society, Weekly Prayer Meeting, Neighbourhood Club, Ladies' Social Circle.

4. Champion Hill, Homestead Township. Church Organization, Chapel. Morning Service every Sunday, Christian Endeavour Society.

5. Platt Lake, Benzonia Township. Chapel. After-

noon Service on alternate Sundays. Ladies' Aid Society.

6. North Crystal, Benzonia Township. Private Home (Chapel, 1914). Afternoon Service on alternate Sundays, Sunday School, Ladies' Aid Society.

8. Demerley, Joyfield Township. Schoolhouse. Afternoon Service on alternate Sundays, Sunday School.

9. South Chapel, Benzonia Township. Chapel. Evening Service on alternate Sundays, Sunday School.

10. East Joyfield, Joyfield Township. Chapel. Evening Service on alternate Sundays, Sunday School.

11. Liberty Union, Benzonia Township. Schoolhouse. Afternoon Service on alternate Sundays, Neighbourhood Club.

12. South Elberta, Gilmore Township. Schoolhouse. Sunday School.[6]

Organizing Denominationalism for Team Play. In the larger little towns, however, denominationalism is a factor to be reckoned with for a long time yet. It is important, therefore, to note what can be done in adapting denominationalism to the community outlook. One of the easiest ways is to recognize that some forms of community service are based both on emulation and the co-operation of small units. In the Boy Scout movement, for example, each town church may well have its scout troop. A recent article in *Association Men* asserts that the churches, colleges and Y. M. C. A.'s are the dominating factors in athletics in America, and concludes "that in the long run the church will have the greatest influence of all because it has the largest number of units in communities all over the country." It further asserts

[6] Mills, "The Making of a Country Parish."

that the churches are more federated in atheltics than they are in any other sphere. The competitive element furnished by contests between church and Sunday School teams fits in exactly with the organization of the denominational church.[7]

Organizing Denominationalism for Work. Team play between the churches is no novelty in other realms than athletics. It is quite the usual thing for the little town to have its ministers' union (composed of pastors of all denominations), which acts as an informal clearing house in co-operative enterprise such as union evangelistic services, the celebration of holidays, law enforcement campaigns, and familiar union movements of national scope like Sunday School betterment. As the scope of social vision has widened, the old lecture course maintained by the churches has often developed into a constructive recreational plan; the anti-tobacco and liquor campaigns into measures for prevention of tuberculosis and other contagious diseases; the occasional union Sunday School rally into a permanent community institute for the training of Sunday School teachers,—who happened already to be using largely identical literature, syndicated by several denominations but issued by each under its own imprint.

Relieving Competition. Nevertheless competitive rivalry is still a staggering handicap to whole-souled community service. There are too many churches for the size of the town, each struggling to live and each forced by the struggle to self-protective measures not in harmony with the general welfare. The most revolutionary discovery with respect to this situation is sim-

[7] *Association Men*, XLI, p. 2.

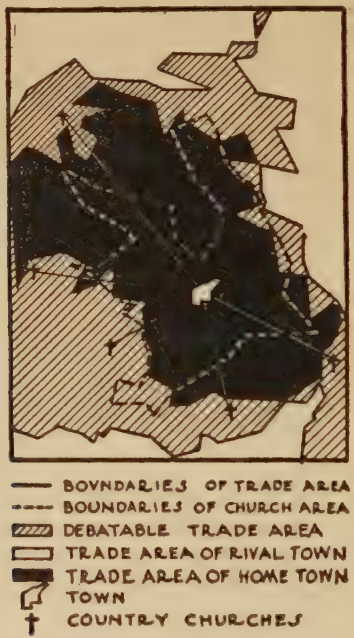
plicity itself, namely, that merely adding the entire trade area of the little town to its field of religious service, frequently takes off the competitive pressure. There are too many churches for the centre, but perhaps not too many for the centre with its surrounding country. When the whole community is contemplated, and the conception of the scope of religion modernized, there is often work enough for all the existing organizations.

The Collegiate Plan. The union of town and country churches into denominational groups under common administration, as in the Benzonia case, is the first step. Without having reached the proportions of a general movement, the organization of such groups of churches on the collegiate plan is in the air. Thus Oregon City, Oregon, a place of about four thousand five hundred people, has recently seen the merging of three outlying Congregational churches with the town church as the "First Congregational Church of Oregon City and Vicinity." Without having clearly sensed the fundamental basis of such a union in the natural community, the movement has been clear about its practical benefits. As a matter of fact the Oregon City church had been the mother of some of the others and it was comparatively easy to include them again in a common leadership. There is a single board of trustees and common ownership of all property, while each individual congregation still transacts its peculiar local business and has power to veto with respect to the property which it occupies. The greatest technical advantage of the plan is that it permits a staff of pastors, one of whom in this case is an expert in young people's work. Another might well be a community leader in the agricultural or

vocational adaptation of the church's message. The basic merit of the plan is, however, recognition of the identity of the town centre and surrounding country in community fortunes.

The Sector and Zone Plan. Now it only remains for each of the strong denominations which has a church in Oregon City to organize on the same plan, in order to cover the entire natural community with adequate religious organization. Minor readjustments would be necessary and could easily be arranged between the denominations which are accustomed to co-operate along currently recognized lines. It might be found that no accidental basis existed for the assignment to the several denominational groups of contiguous fields. More than likely, however, the outlying churches of one or more of the groups would tend to occupy definite sectors of the enlarged community. Assume, for example, an average trade area of one hundred square miles, surrounding a Middle-Western town of twenty-five hundred people. The total community would have at least five thousand population. Assume it to be occupied by three to five leading denominations, represented by so many churches at the centre and a considerable group of rural churches. Half of the church-going rural population of the trade area is already connected with town churches (as indicated by the broken lines on the diagram). The open-country churches which serve the rest are significantly located in the debatable trade area or commercial "no man's land" for which the little town contends with rivals. To carry out the proposed religious reorganization the following steps would be necessary—Beginning at the town centre, the Congregationalists,

say, would find all of their churches within the ninety degrees of the circumference of the trade area lying northward, the Methodists, eastward, the Baptists, south. Should it not work out so ideally, exchanges of fields might be affected in the now familiar manner, so



Church Relationships of a Trade Community.

that finally a definite sector of an agreed number of degrees would belong, from centre to circumference, to each of the co-operating churches which would have undivided responsibility for upwards of one thousand souls. Its radii would be modified to follow roads or natural boundaries, but ultimately each sector would come to be

a recognized parish of a single denomination operating through unified or federated churches. The entire area of the enlarged community would be occupied by as many similar parishes as there were co-operating churches at the town centre, and the religious needs of the entire population met with an adequacy never yet dreamed. Besides this, the fundamental social basis of all the higher life of the nautral community would be recognized.

Internal Organization. Each sector constituting a denominational parish, with its central church and outlying collegiate organizations, would be internally organized on the zone plan. The unchurched Black Belt, marked by the band around the centre just between walking and riding distance, would be overcome by provision of some regular means of transportation to church and Sunday School and by the deliberate quickening of religious allegiance. The churches of the centre would push out beyond the narrower trade area and try to associate all the country churches with them. This would be good for business as well as for religious efficiency. Each country church would be brought into collegiate or federated relation with the central denominational church responsible for the sector within which it falls. The enlarged supporting area together with the quickened community spirit would enable them to afford better religious leadership, and often a staff of ministers, together with adequate means for their transportation. Under such conditions, the country would have as good preaching as the town and as regularly; and what is equally important, it would share the town's recreational and educational experts. The rural expert, who would

be an essential member of the staff of the denominational parish, might well reside in one of the outlying communities; but none of its religious leaders would feel that he belonged more or less to the centre than to the open country. The centre would still be a centre and would be used by the rural population as such, but without the sense of remoteness, alienation or inferiority. Denominationalism would be utilized. The only thing to be eliminated would be the scandal of a non-resident rural ministry employed on the three-hour-a-month basis —and paid accordingly—whose chief interest in the community is the collections. Ninety-two per cent. of rural ministers in a Missouri county were found to be of this class. May the tribe decrease! It is fully recognized that the above scheme has all the weaknesses of any theoretical reorganization of the church, but it is believed that it also has more of strength, especially since it includes existing denominationalism, while at the same time holding fast to the best tendencies of social unification and insisting upon the necessity of somehow covering the entire natural community with an effective organization of religious leadership and service.

BETTER REMEDIAL INSTITUTIONS

Another institutional possibility of the little town is that of better remedial institutions. The relative simplicity of its social structure and its limited population should allow the normal play of its positive agencies of betterment to prevent most of the causes of delinquency and degeneracy. Still it will have its run-away children, its occasional vagrant and feeble-minded person, who just because they will be few in number and because of

the wealth of personal ties in the little town, will often be permanently tolerated in the community when every consideration of social safety requires their prompt removal

Abnormal Individuals and Degenerate Stocks. The variety and technical requirements necessary for the care of abnormal people is far beyond the little town's capacity. The state is their natural custodian; yet kindliness often permits the epileptic to remain as a town curiosity and deals too gently with the truant and incipient criminal. As a consequence, the degeneracy often charged —and sometimes proved—against the little town is a real and imminent peril. Within its borders natural selection has only a few people to work upon; and if human refuse is tolerated in the present generation it will surely appear progressively among its descendants. The kindest policy possible is to save the little town from the taint of vicious heredity at any cost. A decided stiffening of local backbone will generally be necessary to secure the weeding out of the fundamentally unfit,—thus preventing what is worse than contagious disease, and far more dangerous than fire.

Simplified System in Charity and Correction. With respect to its handful of unfortunate or aged people, the poor whom it would be cruel to remove from their homes, it is the little town's business to see that such cruelty is not necessary. It has, however, a better alternative than the general pauperization which frequently follows from the lax administration of out-door relief. A college town in the Middle-West, one of the richest in its state, upon investigation found to its horror that a preposterous proportion of its people were receiving help from the

county. Among them were included families of average financial ability and comfort. The whole point of view had become radically distorted. When the facts were once disclosed their vicious character was apparent to all. As a result, a graduate of a social workers' training course was secured as head of a local "social service league." She was made truant officer, agent for the state child-saving organizations, and put in charge of poor relief within the municipality. In this latter capacity her support was furnished by the county officers. She was able at once to reduce the need of county funds so as to save far more than her salary; and the total cost of her service was brought within the financial possibilities of thousands of little towns.[8] In this way the entire problem of delinquency and poverty came to be handled in a constructive and scientific way. A similar organization is probably needed in thousands of communities even of the little-town class.

[8] *American City*, X, p. 161.

VII

THE TOWN'S POSSIBILITIES: IDEALS

THE REALM OF NEWER POSSIBILITIES

The Demand of Ideals for New Institutions. The most generous sympathy with existing institutions and with efforts for their perfection as civic resources cannot stretch them to match the best current ideals for the community. Throughout the discussion it has been the concern of the author to suggest or instigate no new organization which can be avoided in the already burdened little town. But there are recognized possibilities for which we have no adequate institutional expression, and others lying beyond the best scope of institutions as we now know them. There are ideal spheres besides in which their service is still occasional and optional. Even a good church or school extending itself to serve a good community may not furnish what the more progressive minds demand. Their ideals may remain too far in advance for popular acceptance. Communities, too, will differ. The recognized ideal here will be the novelty there, with no chance for organized expression. Under such circumstances, those who have the vision cannot do otherwise than pioneer in its behalf, whether others will or whether they forbear. And to the end of the human chapter social ideals will be in flux; there will be no one best way for all towns. It can hardly be expected, for example, that those who feel that play is a whole

half of life and equally significant with work should get their sense of values completely recognized even in the ordinarily progressive school. The more radically social version of intelligence will not be served by the best library which remains merely a library; nor that of religion by the best church which continues denominational; nor that of art by any achievement of beauty which is the work of the few. In short, all the more significant human ideals have suffered such revolutionary change at the hand of the modern social consciousness that there must be a realm of new organization directly in the interests of these ideals, as well as that redirection of old organizations of which the last chapter spoke.

Superficial vs. Fundamental Organizations. It is of course true that very much modern organization is of but superficial significance. To establish a new playground association may touch the problem of community recreation much less vitally than to get recreation cordially recognized by the schools and churches. A varied group of social service activities has been invented,—most of which are in the experimental stage. Their permanent forms and functions are by no means sure, and their future relations with other civic forces are especially uncertain. On the other hand all the significant new ideals must find institutional expression sooner or later, and the least that the little town can do is to experiment conservatively with their emerging institutions.

THE EMERGING INSTITUTIONS OF RECREATION

There are those who believe that the community cannot do anything together until it has learned to play together,

and that play is so akin to religion that their finer forms merge. Such people with such convictions will hardly be satisfied with any probable recreational use of the school plant. They can demand nothing less than a central amusement hall and playground for the whole community, integral with its civic centre and in sympathy with its town plan. This is a fundamental feature of the United States Steel Corporation's plans for model industrial towns. Such an attitude toward the play function in community life is finding wide acceptance.

Perversion of and Provision for the Play Impulse. It is urged further that the exceptional perversion of the play instinct under little-town conditions makes a radical provision for it still more necessary. As Dr. Warren Wilson has shown,[1] the extreme poverty of the country in amusement sends the farm population to the little town for almost every recreational satisfaction. This tends to speed up unduly its amusement agencies, and puts upon them extra temptation to exploit the play hunger of the rural population for private gain. It often follows that the "fast set" of the little town outdoes the city. Entertainments which would not be tolerated in the city flourish there. There is a general lack of standards and a fluctuation between puritanism and libertinism which appears as the social tragedy of "Spoon River," in the now famous Anthology. A properly proposed and supervised set of amusement agencies appear more and more necessary. The "opera house," the moving picture show, the pool hall and the public dance are acute perils so long as uncensored by

1 "Social Life in the Country," in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, XV, p. 121.

the community conscience. The completest provision for the needs which they represent is made when the town itself directly operates a municipal amusement plant[2] adapting itself to the tastes of all the people, but maintaining consistent standards and securing united support.

THE EMERGING INSTITUTIONS OF CIVIC INTELLIGENCE

As with recreation, so with culture in the sense of civic intelligence. No improvement of present institutions can fully express it.

The Public Library. The library itself as a public institution is not existent in most of the little towns. There are less than two thousand in the entire United States, and four-fifths of their readers live in the North Atlantic and North Central States. Where the library exists it is harmless and as yet largely purposeless. It reflects in the main the fine old bookish habit which regarded culture as a personal accomplishment sometimes adding to the appreciation of life. The boy curious concerning stars and the club essayist required to write on "art" uses the library; otherwise it is a place of popular magazines and light fiction.

Culture vs. Civic Guidance. It is a far cry from such an agency of culture to the thought of the library as an available collection of information whereby the community may educate itself in what it ought to do. The essential part of the little-town library consists of bulletins and reports on specific items of civic consequence. It is a noteworthy aspect of such literature

[2] For good examples see University of Wisconsin Bulletin No. 234, pp. 29 f. and 35 f.

that much of it costs nothing. Such a bulletin of free literature as is published by the University of Oregon reveals the wide range of agencies, governmental and private, which issue such material. Loan and travelling collections and exhibits may be had almost continuously.[3] These resources bring the working civic library within the grasp of any town. Add, say, two hundred books distributed through eight or ten subjects and the community is supplied with the fundamentals of civic intelligence. All library success is measured in the growing efficiency of the community along civic lines.

The Transformed Library. Integral parts of such a "library" are the museum of local history and the exhibit of local products, with the annual community fair, school exhibit and periodic exhibits of church and club work. Especially important is the annual charting and graphic presentation of the doings of local government and the use of community taxes. The spending of public money is the final test of civic life. Then there will be the annual exhibits of local civic improvement with examples of the similar results of other towns. The travelling exhibits of state and national agencies, agricultural, educational and municipal will be brought to the little town. The striking exhibits of the anti-tuberculosis and other public health movements will be included.

Concrete and Graphic Methods. The re-directed library turns into an exhibit hall in which the books are the mere interpreters of facts visually presented. This marks not only the appeal from the printed page to the

[3] Tarbell, "A Village Library," publication of Massachusetts Civic League (Boston).

more concrete and graphic means of communicating ideas but also the shifting of the idea of culture from books to things and measures, from far interests to near ones, and from other people's idealization of life to one's own. The improvement of the old library ends in quite another institution under the control of a new idea of civic intelligence.

The Civic Forum. The other emerging agency of civic intelligence is the public auditorium carrying out a definite scheme of extension education for the community. Here by lecture, lantern and open discussion, the ideals of community action, of local government and of voluntary organization are still further popularized. Instead of the casual occurrence of lecture or demonstration, there is a curriculum of public education as inclusive and progressive as that of the school. The church no longer merely exploits the man with a message to help it pay for decorating its auditorium. The Chautauqua is no longer a private commercialized venture. There is a plan of community education as definitely involving the principles of pedagogy as that of the school. It is made possible doubtless through the cooperation of the school authorities and public spirited citizens. Civic improvement then becomes no longer a succession of spasms but a process as continuous as the education of children from generation to generation. The town will go on decade after decade studying itself, determining what it wants to do, popularly educating its people and directing its life by intelligence backed by the emotion which comes from knowledge and appreciation.

Tool vs. Ornament. The community which is really

doing business with its library as a tool of civic intelligence, and which takes its museum seriously as an epitome of community life, will be saved from the local magnate who wishes to make them a mausoleum or memorial of his pride and bad taste. No man will accept a tool which he cannot use; but many a community which did not regard its library as a tool has accepted one which it does not really use. Sometimes the gift involves preposterous architecture or such perpetuation of the donor's idiosyncrasies as will make the community a laughing stock to the centuries. Serious purpose is the first element in good taste. It will not occur to any one to offer a shoddy article to a community which takes its institutions of intelligence seriously, and such a community will be sure to have the courage to refuse an unworthy gift.

The Social Survey. The technical expression of civic intelligence in its more radical version is the social survey. In plain English this means nothing more than an accurate and generally a statistical study of conditions as they exist in any particular town and of the agencies available for its improvement. The results of an interesting but rather limited survey are given in the first chapter.[4] The complete survey of a great city makes a good sized volume. Two or three dozen pages may suffice to give a fairly comprehensive statement of the case of the little town. The points discussed in these chapters would make a reasonably comprehensive outline for such a survey. Its technique is now fairly established and the experience of numerous communities is available as to its benefits. There is no other way

[4] p. 21.

for the town, little or big, to find out what it ought to do and to find out the present facts as to its conditions and resources.

The Use of the Survey. The immediate popular use of the survey is to stir interest in civic improvement. Its discoveries should be pictured, charted and exhibited. They will have obvious relations to the work of the church, commercial club, the school and the town council. The minister will preach a sermon; the commercial club will issue an illustrated leaflet; the school will modify its curriculum, and the council pass ordinances. The record of the survey should then find permanent place in the public library. Two or three years from now the town will want to ask the same questions over again, so as to know accurately whether and how fast it has progressed or gone backward. The more profound and technical use of the survey will be limited to the few who have the long-look-ahead in civic matters. On the basis of it they will take the initial steps in a comprehensive program of community upbuilding; namely, the development of a pedagogical plan and a financial plan.

The Community Program. The town is full of hard headed and wrong headed people,—retired farmers superficial women, dictatorial leading citizens and selfish politicians. The problem is to present the necessary steps of a civic improvement program in such guise and in such order that it will be acceptable to those who have or vote the necessary funds. It requires the wisdom of the serpent as well as the harmlessness of the dove, and many a fine civic program has come to grief at this point. That must be proposed which will carry. At the same time the first steps must not be too super-

ficial and they must lead on to the complete and ideal program. The practical financial issues are perplexing. There is a limit to the ability of the town to borrow money. Possibly the issue is between sewers and streets or a new high school or town hall. If the decision is for the former, then the old buildings must be repaired or remodelled. If too much money is put into them it will not be possible to raise the question of new buildings for the next five or ten years. If both the high school and the town hall are possible one of them will want to include a great auditorium for civic purposes; but which one? This question will have much bearing upon the location of either building, upon its architectural design, and upon the future civic policy of the community. In other words, the comprehensive program must answer the question: In what order shall we proceed? How fast can we go? How shall immediate gains be kept from preventing remoter gains, and what will be the effect upon the future of our present plans and decisions?

THE EMERGING INSTITUTION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD

Just Human Fellowship. Of the newer social ideals which are seeking fresh institutional expression the simplest and most fundamental is that of neighbourhood itself. The interest of folk in one another is the broadest and deepest basis of human association. Play and intellectual interests and even moral aims attract some of the people all of the time and possibily all of the people some of the time; but fellowship for all of the people all of the time is the very bread of life. It is the primal enjoyment and the final helpfulness. It necessarily finds

outlet in all directions and includes all possible civic activities. In its socialized version, it seeks to raise incidental neighbourhood into conscious brotherhood.

Extending the Home Spirit to the Whole Community. The hunger of this ideal begins to find institutional satisfaction when some central place—church, schoolhouse, civic hall or club—takes on the attributes of a community home. In contrast with the specialized institutions of trade, education or worship, the home is precisely a place where all the interests of all the members merge. The institutional task of the community spirit is to create such a place in which all the people come together into actual acquaintance and which expresses in the simplest terms of neighbourliness, all the interests which the social survey discovers and with which civic intelligence must deal. It must take all these matters out of the realm of problems and give them home flavour as the practical human concerns of all of us.

Social Centres in City and Country. Civic centre, social centre, and community centre are names hinting at slightly varying aspects of the widespread current effort to evolve an institution directly incarnating the neighbourly spirit in its inclusive form. In the city are crowded people of many nationalities, races and social classes. They are often of alien speech; they cherish inherited animosities and suspicions. They live poorly under conditions which make the street more potent than the home. They have equal poverty of social life and what they have is often misdirected, commercialized, unwholesome. Yet they would respect and enjoy each other if they could only become acquainted. Now here

are great buildings and wide grounds—churches, schools, parks—erected with the people's money and ostensibly for public purposes, yet idle and empty most of the hours of most of the days. Why not lay hold on these places with the neighbourhood spirit and make them homes-at-large for the total community?

At the other extreme of contrasting fortunes is the scattered group of farm families constituting a rural neighbourhood. They are divided chiefly by distance and the non-coöperative character of their calling. With them is found an equal call for deliberate neighbourliness and for the conscious enrichment of life through enlarged companionship. This is the mission of the social centre in the open country.

The Little Town's Social Centre. As applied to the little town, the social centre idea lacks the incentives which arise from extreme congestion or extreme isolation of population. It has already been pointed out as one of the primary virtues of these smaller centres that they have kept the neighbourly consciousness which city and country have lost. On the other hand, the little town uses its advantage in this respect, but poorly. It substitutes the dissensions of cliques for those of nationalities and the petty competitions of institutions for the vast clash of diverse interests. Frequently, before its churches, schools, town government, commercial and women's clubs can exert an effective leadership, they must somehow re-discover neighbourhood as a constructive force. This need is fundamental. No matter how many superfluous organizations a little town already has it may still need that inclusive one which embraces all the people in the bounds of neighbourly friendship.

Either the social centre or get the ideal adequately expressed in some other way!

"Rurban" Extension of the Ideal. The Department of Education of the state of Washington [5] is making a most interesting attempt to interpret the social centre ideal in the terms of the little town and its surrounding dependent country. County superintendents of education are directed to organize the schools under their supervision into community centres. Occasionally, they are told, there should be a grouping of one-room schoolhouses into a district organization for neighbourliness; but ordinarily a small town with a four year high school in it, is to be officially recognized as the community centre and its neighbouring school districts grouped with it into a natural area within which the neighbourhood spirit is to be discovered and in which its social consequences are to be worked out. This is the first definitely "rurban" re-statement of the social centre idea in official terms.

RELIGION IN ITS COMMUNITY EXPRESSIONS

The supreme realms in which no perfection of institutions can match the demand of ideals are those of worship and of art. The town stands in cosmic relations: its neighbourhood extends upward as well as outward: it is conscious of itself as looked down upon by the stars, and as capable of looking back at them with a significant emotion and a sense of infinite mystery. It stands also

[5] Preston, *The Community Center*, State of Washington Department of Education, Bulletin No. 20; Thomason, *Suggestions for Community Centers*, State of Washington Department of Education, Bulletin No. 26.

AN ANCIENT NEW ENGLAND CHURCH

in certain august relationships, historical and social, which inspire reverence and challenge the individual to supreme loyalty and consecration. Such is the story of our forefathers' toil and sacrifice, the fine old traditions, the subtle influence which explain most that is good in us, the spell of the cradle and of the altar; the sense of being possessed by the nation too, the "mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearth-stone all over this broad land"; and finally our conscious place as somehow unique agents in this our World of our Time, —individuals each with an inviolate personality. These all cry out for collective expression and response in the little town as in the big. The community especially which has developed social mindedness and a sort of collective personality through the working out of a civic program on lower levels, cannot keep back the impulse toward civic worship and some form of creative art. A continual striving will be in it which cannot be institutionalized nor cast into fixed moulds; but which necessarily utilizes the recurring anniversaries of the town, the nation and of Christendom.

The Town Standing Before God. The community experience of religion has other quality than that realized through the separate services of denominational congregations. At Christmas time, Easter and Children's Day, these congregations find themselves re-enforced by considerable numbers of people who do not attend church regularly. They are said to come to "hear the music" or "see the children." A profounder view appreciates the fact that they are responding to another and more comprehensive phase of religion than is ordinarily pre-

scribed or than is easily expressed through sectarian forms. In the main, however, it is not another group of people who respond to the appeal of civic religion; but the same group who have already responded to religion in its individual version,—with some additions. But the two groups are not co-extensive: together they are larger than either is alone, and the civic approach to religion of which they are together capable yields points of co-operation not otherwise secured. The town stands before God even as the single man does, and there are some in it who, for the present at least, will come before Him in this way and not in any other.

Civic Evangelism and Its Occasions. The appeal of this version of religion, both to those otherwise religious and to those otherwise not so religious, is imperatively necessary to secure the loyalties and authorities which underlie civic betterment. Narrowness and selfishness are entrenched in the little town: they have dug themselves in with the intention of staying. To exorcise them is not easy. There has to be an evangelism of civic religion, and a continuous education of youth and of the active community in it. Their most natural occasions are those upon which the community as such already gathers in the name of religion,—Thanksgiving, community Christmas exercises, union summer services, and the like.

Civic Religion Co-extensive with Civic Interests. But civic religion cannot be limited to the fasts and feasts already traditionally pertaining to the church and the Christian year. It is essentially an interpretation of all civic interests in the light of their final ideals. There is something pitiable, for example, in securing a

"sane" Fourth of July and stopping there. Patriotism has a good many interests beyond sanity which it is the business of religion to find and enforce positively. It has to announce the positive message of community events,—of school commencement, the agricultural fair, Old Home Week, the dedication of public buildings, the departure of soldiers to join the colours, the anniversaries of religious and civic organizations,—to touch their story with emotion and display it as the august background of the common life.

A Civic Faith which Works. As actually experienced in the average little town, nothing can exceed the stupidity, conventionality, falsehood and lack of vital quality which pervades many of these occasions,—and chiefly because they are cut off from any relation to a definite and persistent program of civic betterment. Religion in its community phase, cannot begin but can only complete the cycle of civic progress. Until the civic tasks of the little town are undertaken religiously, they cannot be talked about religiously with any truth or profit. A strong and earnest educational spirit throughout the year will put meaning into commencement exercises. In turn, the idealization of education on commencement day will reinforce next year's entire school work. A keen civic interest will make a vital Fourth of July possible, and a good Fourth will make for better civic interest. It is the weakness and beauty of religion that it must keep its feet upon the ground while its face is against the stars. None of the things most deeply desirable for the little town are possible without reinforcement of religion—but civic religion itself is impossible without some basis in community

service, without a body of facts and efforts which it may idealize and interpret. Many a decadent little town has erected into a religious dogma the exceptional glory of its founders, its supreme culture and the unrivalled virtues of its women—and has done nothing to justify any of these articles of its creed. In no field is faith without works more barren—or more ridiculous.

THE FINE ARTS IN THEIR CIVIC MINISTRIES

The most splendid and inclusive of community ideals are expressed and secured through the fine arts, most of which, after due measure and fashion, are available for even the very little town. Even their miniature version is peculiarly wholesome and delightful.

Music. Perhaps the most unique development of community music in America is the achievement of a small Swedish town in Kansas, which the president of the local college describes as follows: "In the heart of the agricultural district, about two hundred miles west of Kansas City, lies the little town of Lindsborg, a hamlet of scarcely two thousand souls, which is the musical centre of the Southwest. . . . Each Easter week its people perform Handel's 'Messiah' with a chorus of five hundred voices and an orchestra of forty pieces. . . . Among its members there are those who participated in the first performance, and it is no uncommon thing for three generations of the same family to be represented. One of the unique features is a Children's Chorus of three hundred. . . . The 'Messiah' is given three times each season—Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. . . . Each afternoon and evening of the week are given over to musical entertainment by visiting

artists. . . . Every available room in the public hostelries, as well as in private homes, is in demand. On the 'Messiah' days the railroads furnish special train service. A single one of these special trains brought in over twelve hundred visitors for the concerts on the opening day of the season this spring. During the hours these strangers are in the city, Lindsborg finds its population increased threefold. . . . The whole undertaking has about it something of the old-world atmosphere of simplicity bordering on the severely primitive. The concerts are given in a large wooden structure, octagonal in shape and furnished with wooden benches. The women in the chorus are attired in white and the men in conventional black. As the five hundred singers arise at the signal of the director, the effect is overwhelming. There is no applause during the program, which lasts about three hours, and the atmosphere is rather that of a religious service than of the concert hall. The Bethany Oratorio Society is now a permanent fixture in the development of the community. It represents the one aspiration in which the inhabitants, regardless of all other differences, are undivided. The course is still recruited from the people of the town and the countryside. Among its members there are those who drive from seven to eight miles—no small degree of devotion, particularly on cold winter nights, over rough roads. The repertoire of the chorus has been expanded until it includes all of the standard oratorios. Bethany Oratorio Society has demonstrated its usefulness, as well as its artistic value. Through its efforts the little Swedish hamlet on the broad prairies of Kansas has been made one of the musical centres of the country. It has brought into the materialistic life of a new state—

where in the nature of things the butter and bread question is uppermost—something of the softening influence of old-world culture, and has gained for the Swedish immigrant a distinction beyond that of a 'hewer of wood and a drawer of water.' The 'Messiah' at Lindsborg has proven a tangible contribution to that new, seething life which is springing out of the prairies of the great Southwest."[6]

A More Modest Example. In strong contrast with the highly organized and now venerable Lindsborg case is the recent experience of a small Minnesota town with impromptu outdoor "sings" conducted by a summer resident. "Three weeks ago in the court house yard (we have no parks as yet but hope to, as Anoka is a small city of 3,000) we had an outdoor 'sing.' Everything was donated; the expense nothing and the work very little. I mounted a box and swung the stick for the band and the multitude. One of the printing offices donated the printing and the words of the old songs like Home Sweet Home, Suwanee River, Come Thou Almighty King, were all printed out. The city strung lights and 5,000 people came. A number came from the neighbouring village of Minneapolis. Nearly twice as many were there as this town holds. They sang pretty well, for the first time. However, that was not the primary thing. It was a place to visit; a thing to bring them together out of doors. It was a great success."[7]

[6] *Community Music*, Bulletin University of Wisconsin, Extension Division, p. 14.

[7] *Community Music*, Bulletin University of Wisconsin, Extension Division, p. 20.

Social Concord Through Sweet Sounds. The apostles of community music believe that it has immense social power. It harmonizes men as well as voices. Men work together better for singing together. Nothing more inevitably tends to carry over incidental neighbourhood into conscious brotherhood. It is the art which most directly realizes unity through harmonious co-operation. It is the only active exercise which the entire town can share at once. Men are caught up with it who are not individually or passively sensitive to the higher emotions. It provokes the patriotism of peace as well as the patriotism of war. It is one of the finest of the little town's possibilities.

Architecture. In a town of any size, every major interest will eventually get some architectural expression; government in the town hall, religion in the churches, education in the schoolhouse, recreation in the theatre or "movies," intelligence in the library, fraternity (in the narrower sense) in the lodge hall, trade in the commercial club building. These with the post office and railway station are the structures in which the town expects most distinctive character and adaptation to community uses.

Inter-action of Expert and Community. It is certain that civic idealism will want to stamp these buildings with its own impress. They belong to the town collectively far more than to the several interests which may own them. They characterize the town to the eye and to reputation, largely making or marring it. They ought to be the most fitting and perfect expression of what the town means by the things which it chiefly does. A public building designed by an architect in a distant

city, erected by a non-resident contractor with imported labour, and paid for by a rich benefactor or by money concealed within a general tax levy, has exactly the same moral and social quality as music performed by alien professionals in a foreign language. But music, as has been shown, may easily be democratized and made the handmaid of the community spirit. With architecture it is not so easy. At best the expert must conceive and do; the public can do little but watch and pay. It is of the greatest importance then that in all the ways which remain possible under modern conditions, the architectural middle-man be kept subordinate and that public buildings shall be the expression of community ideals. Such a condition is often approximated in the building of a church which is really a community enterprise in contrast with merely a sectarian one. Perhaps volunteer labour will excavate for the foundation while the women look on and make coffee. At any rate, signing the subscription paper pays for the right to take active interest and to criticize, which is in itself an education. In the building of town halls, a different community spirit is evoked when taxes give out and the work has to be completed by popular subscription. If taxation is resorted to, the necessity of voting special bonds brings directly home to the community the test of willingness to pay for its ideals. A building which everybody uses ought to cost everybody something; the sense of this gives him the maximum of ideal investment in it. This is the universal formula for relating architecture and ideals, though its applications are varied. But when any community has the keen sense of general participation in making a public building possible, that sense will be

measurably conveyed to those who handle the money and their paid experts and will indubitably modify their art.

The Town a Work of Art. When a town passes on from the consideration of architecture as primarily concerned with particular buildings, to think of its entire area with its material improvements as an expression of civic architecture and a possible work of art, the universal and direct participation of its citizens in the result becomes not only possible but inevitable. Town plan—that first element of civic well being, logically speaking—finds its ultimate value precisely in the fact that it permits and invites the final co-operative realization of community ideals of fitness, order and beauty, home by home, street by street, throughout all the town's borders. In such an atmosphere no man can build or maintain his house except in the sense of being part of a whole. In recent years the author has been watching the development of two areas in a suburban town. The first was created by a development company. It employed a good landscape architect, laid off the streets artistically, provided for all utilities, erected most of the houses on a high plane of architectural merit, planned and planted their grounds, and put rigid restrictions as to quality and beauty on those which should follow. The result is a section of unusual beauty. At the same time, however, a neighbouring section has grown up in which houses have been built one at a time and under no restrictions save those of taste and fitness. The result is an equal quality of architecture and landscaping with an even more pleasing harmony of effect than that which was ready-made. The tradition of the community, together with the ordinary provision of streets and utili-

ties by the town, took care of unity of impression. The houses conspired together to make the street attractive.

The little town rarely shows anything like this, yet it rarely fails to diffuse some fragmentary love of beauty throughout the whole population. Hundreds of decrepit Negro cabins on the edges of Southern towns will have flower gardens. It is easy to get almost everybody to raise flowers. It is not just as easy, but by the same token should not be impossible to get everybody to sense the larger and more comprehensive aspects of civic beauty and to share in a universal habit of order and fitness which shall make the entire town an artistic composition and its streets and houses to sing together like a great chorus. Some of the better New England villages—which had a fine heritage of taste from their forefathers—have well-nigh accomplished this through their Improvement Societies.

Pageantry. In the pageant, civic idealism has a newly available and popular medium of rare congeniality.[8] This old art of pantomime, revived and enriched by music and often by the larger use of the spoken word, has been used in America chiefly to depict and epitomize local history and to awaken civic pride. Towns have made it mark their centuries and colleges have called it to celebrate their decades. The pageant also fittingly unites religious and civic aspirations. Among its most beautiful and satisfying examples is a community celebration of Christmas mystery plays given at Bronxville, New York, in 1914 and 1915.

An Evangel of Civic Betterment. The pageant cele-

[8] See Tanner, "The Pageant of the Little Town of X," publication of Mass. Civic League (Boston).

brating the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of Thetford, Vermont, sought to be a direct vehicle of community awakening and progress. Parallel with the work of creating an artistic expression of the town's story went the practical work of a committee of experts dealing with all current phases of its civic life. The last episode of the pageant dealt with the country town problem of today, depicting the struggle between discouragement and confidence in the new resources possible through scientific agriculture and the better vision of community life. Its central message was that Thetford might be made the ideal place to live in.[9]

Art and Democracy. Unhappily not every pageant held in a little town has been a genuine expression of community ideals. Some have been merely the diverting performances of summer residents and other transients. Others have sacrificed democracy to art. Of course the participation of large numbers of inexpert people does not in itself make a pageant worth giving and it ought not to be necessary in the name of democracy to make the artistically judicious grieve. On the other hand, civic value in the pageant demands that it be in some true sense popular,—a condition well fulfilled in a North Carolina mountain hamlet where a mission school in 1915 enacted a pageant of local Appalachain history as a commencement event. Its purpose was to stir a backward community with the dignity of its own story, to awaken self-respect, and a sense of the present possibilities of mountain life. Naturally initiative and technical skill had to come from teachers trained elsewhere, but the local spirit soon made the enterprise its own.

[9] "The Pageant of Thetford," Book of Words, etc.

As carried out it was by, for and of the mountains. In large measure it enabled the community to embrace the generations of its past in sympathy, to feel the vital movements of its history and to respond with religious seriousness to the implicit message concerning the present. A good many more marvellous things have come true than that the chief types of communal art should spread to every American town and village, so that their people, as a whole, should be able to sing, to plan and build and to express dramatically the praise of their heritage and of their own better visions. The instinct of beauty is universal. In some of its aspects the common life is always worth praising. Art is natural and naturalizes in every well planned work. Whenever it touches one of the major experiences of a community, praise should be made glorious in some expression which is recognized as art just in proportion as it is natural, fitting and sincere.

Creative Genius in the Little Town. So much on the side of enjoyment and appreciation of art as it may be acquired by the interactions of work and culture in a community which does not pretend to have originated it. There remains art as an individual gift. Creative imagination probably is distributed fairly throughout the human race. Generally it is thwarted by inability to break through into expression in a materialistic and commercialized world. Instead, however, of elegizing over the narrow opportunities of genius in little towns, it is the part of good sense to furnish the smaller communities with those means of expression which shall invite homespun talent and give it a chance. To turn the heart "pregnant with celestial fire" to community

PAGEANT SCENES AS GIVEN BY A SCHOOL FOR SOUTHERN HIGHLANDERS

themes is not only sound conservationist policy but also the best way to make genius permanently serve the nation. Nothing evens up as between communities like the presence of genius which knows neither little nor big. It occurred to a New Hampshire village of two hundred people to become a bird sanctuary, where wild life should be sacred. After that the poets could not be kept away. A dramatist put the story into beautiful symbols; a president's daughter danced it; there was nothing finer of its sort on earth.[10]

Now the shrine may be as wonderful as the cathedral. Little Bethlehem has no rivals among the princes of Judah. There are plenty of fine thoughts yet to be conceived of the spirit of life, and any little town may put itself permanently upon the map by mothering one of them and telling the world about it.

[10] *American City*, X, p. 355.

VIII

THE TOWN'S TOOLS

The Agencies of Community Betterment. Repeated surveys have shown that the typical little town which has developed as a centre of an agricultural community, possesses from twenty to forty distinct organizations chiefly churches, schools, clubs and lodges, all of which are potential and occasionally actual agencies of civic betterment; but none of which has or feels condemned for not having a consistent and permanent civic outlook and program. So informal are the relations between them and so uncertain the bounds of their functions and responsibilities, that almost any organization may on occasion initiate a movement for almost any of the town's possibilities. It all depends upon who gets the idea first. In community movements the natural leaders simply follow the bias of their own interests. The minister turns to the church, the merchant to the commercial group, the teacher to the school, the temporary official to town government, the farmer to the grange, the woman to her club. No one claims a balanced view of civic resources, nor has any one studied their functional characteristics and the natural interrelationships of the various agencies available.

Character and Calibre of Little Town Leadership. The one thing certain is that whoever turns his hand to any community interest will be an amateur. The

social expert in the urban sense cannot be afforded and the town would not tolerate a city brand of efficiency if it could. Personality and personal relations remain the central interests of the little town. The town's leader will be the volunteer, one of its own sort whose calibre may be judged by the average pulpit or weekly paper of such a community. He must be skilled first of all in dealing with people, in placating them, in making individual allowances. These capacities will bulk larger than any technical expertness. This is both strength and limitation; but at any rate it is a permanent condition which shuts up civic betterment to the working out of this and that specific measure through such processes as will convince ordinary people of its desirability, one at a time. This robust democratic policy, with its thorough-going honesty, assures substantial quality to the little town's achievements. In the long run it gets what it goes after.

Availability of World-Experience. When one has said this he must in candour add that the average community takes a long road to its civic Canaan and wastes much time wandering in the wilderness—as though no one had ever been that way before. In such a world as ours even the inexpert voluntary worker need not work in the dark. He must use or at least appreciate varied and often highly technical tools and must somehow make them all work to a common end. Why then should he not consult the man who made the tools? The beauty of fresh social initiative in the obscure village does not compensate for the folly of repeating errors a thousand times. Our frequent misdirections of civic zeal are largely gratuitous in view of the available so-

cial assets of the nation. One may learn by making the same mistake that others have made, but the educational economy of this method is doubtful. It is obviously most important therefore, that the collective intelligence of the little town, as incarnated in its voluntary civic leaders, shall somehow take stock of its tools before beginning its work; that so far as possible the right tools be used in the right place and approved and standardized methods followed. Especially important is it that there be such an understanding of the total forces operating for town betterment and of their mutual relations as shall prevent them from blocking and neutralizing one another.

INTERNAL RESOURCES OF COMMUNITY BETTERMENT

Governmental and Voluntary Agencies. The internal resources of the little town consist of a group of governmental and voluntary agencies intersphering in interesting fashion. Such intersphering is more characteristic and complete in such communities than in any other phase of civilization. Thus, it is rather expected that the library building will be a private benefaction though its support will be taxation. When a municipal bond sale fails to yield sufficient resources, Spring Valley, Wis., very naturally turns to supplementary private subscriptions to build its town hall. The little town's school is everywhere a legal minimum and a voluntary maximum. It is supposed to depend for its excellence upon popular interest and loyalty. Whole sections of the country, notably the South, assume that voluntary contributions will supplement state and local funds in the erection of school plants. Charity, public and

private, is regularly and often viciously intermingled. The laws of nearly every state provide at certain points for the co-operation of governmental machinery and voluntary civic organizations in local communities. Thus, Missouri authorizes towns to appoint nurses to co-operate with voluntary anti-tuberculosis societies. Kansas allows them to use taxpayers' money to pay membership fees in the State League of Municipalities —a voluntary agency. As everywhere else, but in the little town especially, any civic pioneering involving new vision, thought, sacrifice or money, will have to depend upon private initiative to start the wheels of government.

Alternatives as Between Tools. Under simple conditions, the processes necessary to persuade a community to vote a bond issue are essentially identical with those which induce it to make a popular subscription; and the movement of civic life is equally democratic whichever alternative is chosen. The recognized municipal functions, of course, should not be allowed to lapse back upon private virtue for exercise and support; but in most fields of town improvement it will make little difference whether the governmental or the voluntary resource is called upon in a given case. Provided paternal corporations and wealthy alien benefactors do not intervene, one method is not essentially better than the other. It all depends upon the town and the circumstances. Rigid discrimination between the proper functions of civil government and of voluntary organization is at least unnecessary. Furthermore, the limited taxing and borrowing powers of the little town will compel it for a long time to look to collective philan-

thropy for many things which the city does as a city. The real test of good or bad in civic betterment is whether its movement is genuinely democratic, founded in the community consciousness and will.

The Re-shaping of All Tools. This large alternative as to the use of agencies, greatly simplifies the civic problems of the little town. On the other hand it cannot escape its share in the radical re-shaping of institutions and social agencies which the whole world is experiencing. Nowhere are the old civil forms or the old voluntary institutions, or both together, adequate for the present day tasks of the community. The modification of the old tools by new purposes is everywhere under way. The alternatives here are between the redirection of the old or the substitution of new agencies of social will. There are those who temperamentally incline to the keeping and re-making of old tools; and those who tend to abandon them for new ones, on slight provocation. These divide into different camps and their differences largely shape the working programs of all communities. The little town need not stop for long debate as to whether its council should order a needed improvement or whether a citizens' organization shall take it up and finance it. The issue here is largely of practical convenience. On the other hand, the whole conception of local government is being revolutionized. This necessitates re-definition of all its powers and functions. A new set of basic ideas has come to underlie institutions, involving their profound internal reorganization; while new forms of organization are emerging to match the enlarged activities of community life. In these respects the little town's solutions of its problems

simply must not remain conventional. What new reach do civil powers need? Through what new agencies should they be shaped to their task? How do the ideal possibilities which challenge our towns relate themselves to existing institutions? Should the school, for example, be empowered to condemn land for the site of a playground? When the school gets an enlarged playground is that enough for the community? Does the church need one also? How is the play of children related to the sports of youth and the recreation of adults in a complete curriculum of recreation for the entire population? Is the play impulse to be expressed through existing institutions, or is it so basic in importance as to demand direct institutional expression through some new agency which is recreational and nothing else? These are typical of the questions needing to be asked in every sphere of town improvement before the proper adjustment of its older and newer resources is made. Through their painstaking answers the tools of collective purpose are being selected and shaped.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES OF COMMUNITY BETTERMENT

Of external resources the town has a vast array of helpful agencies, public and voluntary, existing on the state-wide, nation-wide and even world-wide scale. These constitute the contribution of the town's world to its local problem. Many are the officers, many the prophets ready to tell it its duty. The total social resources of civilization are ready to be focused upon the smallest community.

The County. First, there are the regular officials of county government, essentially representative of the

state, whose jurisdiction (frequently with that of the township as well) covers the little town, and who help or hinder it with its problems of safety, education, poor relief and the like. County government links the little town with the open country from which the town has usually severed itself by incorporation, and so far tends to keep alive vital relationships. On the other hand, the existence in the same area of two sets of minor officials with duplicatory jurisdiction tends to complicate matters and to defeat united social action. No good reason can now be given for the division of powers between county and local government as it exists in much of the nation.

How the County Helps. That the county does help in social progress is undeniable. Indeed large use of it is being made by some of the most outstanding movements for community betterment. The county library system exists in an important group of states. Where the usefulness of the library formerly ended with the town limits, or with the few farmers intelligent enough to pay a fee for the use of books, the county system is willing to include both town and country in an effort to universalize library privileges. In the South, where the smaller units of local government have little prestige or strength, civic idealism naturally tends to express itself through county movements. A capital example is that of the transformation of the ancient colonial courthouse of Rowan County, North Carolina into a community centre on a large scale, housing the whole group of betterment agencies both of city and country.[1] Agricultural betterment through state and

[1] *Town Development*, XII, p. 106.

Federal agents and funds has naturally followed existing political divisions. The county has thus become its most frequent unit of organization. The rural Y. M. C. A. usually adopts the county as its administrative unit. It has been authoritatively proposed as the natural area for church federation. And above all, recent educational progress has made some of its most marked and rapid strides under county administration.[2]

The County's Limited Usefulness. In spite of all this, it is doubtful whether the county is a natural agent for most of the better things which communities ought to do, and whether the tendency toward the use of the county unit is really desirable. County organization, in the first place, "is created almost exclusively with a view to the policy of the state at large";[3] it does not originate in the concrete needs of communities, nor is it designed to meet them. Second, the county unit of administration was an advantage even from the standpoint of general government only so long as population was sparse, means of communication slow, community life poorly organized and state agents inexpert. Over most of the area of the nation, these conditions are rapidly passing where they have not passed. Population combines naturally into administrative units smaller than the ordinary county; distances shrink with transit facilities; social life is more complicated; the state has more and better agents. The current successes therefore of county betterment movements are to be credited to convenience and coincidence rather than to the excellence of the county as a social tool. Thus, in

[2] Cubberley, "Rural Life and Education," p. 230.
[3] Fairlie, "Local Government," p. 64.

its early stages, when a constructive social movement must spread itself out thin,—when there is only money enough to pay one expert or executive, it is natural enough to make him a county agent. But this is a temporary expedient. Its success is a success of convenience. Ultimately organization will follow natural community lines. Again, where an enterprising city undertakes to lead the community development of its dependent rural population, it may easily be that the natural community area roughly corresponds to county lines. Excellent examples are the county farm bureaus fostered by many Boards of Trade with Federal cooperation. The county unit is used advantageously because of its coincidence with a more vital social unit.

Over-praise of the County. Admitting the limited usefulness of the county as an administrative unit for community improvement is quite different from the excess admiration which is being poured out upon it in quarters from which greater discrimination was to be expected. The county shows the easy success of elementary efficiency in contrast with stupid and intolerable localism. It provides one expert in an area which had had none. So long as a more fundamental unit of local government is not developed, the county will furnish—in the absence of cities—the area of sufficient size and dignity to demand ordinary attention; and civic progress will have to depend upon it to some extent. It does not, however, mark an ultimate social readjustment.

Growing Activity of the State. Just so far as the natural "rurban" organization of rural and town society is recognized, it will be seen to present communi-

ties fitted to have direct dealings with the state. The county will keep some of its old functions; it is not likely to be the vehicle of the newer civic life. Increasingly the state is entering into immediate relations with towns. It frequently creates them by special charter and makes special laws for them. State experts and representatives of state universities are directly available on call for assistance in many local social problems. The tendency is toward strongly centralized state school systems which inspect and subsidize town schools. These schools in town keep annexing more and more of the country to their districts, leaving less and less under exclusive county supervision. Other direct ministries of the state have developed. The University of Wisconsin is ready to become engineer, retail salesman, community musician or social organizer to the little towns of its state. The Kansas Agricultural College has directly fostered the local organization of Boy Scout troops throughout the state.[4] In 1915 the Municipal Reference Bureau of the University of Kansas served one hundred and sixteen towns with information on three hundred and thirty-three problems, including the drafting of ordinances, legal advice, engineering data, and community organization. More than half of these towns had less than two thousand population. In the matter of agricultural betterment it is largely the money of the United States which makes such service possible. In this realm the nation itself is put at the service of the little town.

The Town's World. An impressive array of voluntary betterment organizations proclaim the active ideal-

[4] McKeever, "Farm Boys and Girls," p. 166.

ism of our age, and are largely available for the small community. In most cases they originated with groups of local organizations which became federated, and now on national scale are attempting to centralize and direct their peculiar interests,—each with a system of propaganda and financial support through publicity, conventions, exhibits, the visitation of experts and the organizations of local branches or chapters. Thus there are the national, district and state commercial organizations, linking the commercial club or board of trade of the little town with the total commercial movement of the nation. The educational field is closely covered over with helpful organizations. Does the little town want to perfect its machinery of social betterment in any direction, there is almost sure to be a national agency with its literature, leaders, standardized methods and experts available for assistance. The Playground and Recreation Association of America, the national organization of boys' clubs, the Boy Scouts' and Camp Fire Girls' organizations, are shining examples; not to speak of the Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A.

The Great Religious and Civic Movements. The great Christian agencies, denominational and interdenominational, constitute another important group of helps available for the little town. Few realize how much more they are than sectarian movements. They are essentially nationalizing agencies of the first magnitude, the earliest to inculcate civic virtue through organization reaching every obscure community, and quick to add the social message of the gospel to their propaganda. Home missions has all along involved statesmanship of a high order. Most of these agencies now

have their programs of social service and their social experts, sometimes equally competent with those of the state or the universities. Much of their work is being done in the same progressive and scientific spirit found in the world of education and social organization. The various civic federations and movements, ostensibly of state or national scope, attempt to focalize the total movement of community betterment. Their claims are frequently inflated, but they do invaluable service as evangelists of ideals and in disseminating specific information. All told, the danger of the little town would seem to be pauperization rather than poverty of civic impulse. There are so many good things forcing themselves upon it that it must learn to choose, and especially to adapt them to its scale of needs and resources. The wider agencies, civil and voluntary, themselves intersphere on the state or national plane. There are federations of federations, of denominations and of the great religious movements. Especially important are the state Leagues of Municipalities in which town officials unite on a voluntary basis in discussion of mutual problems and methods. Some states have given legal recognition to such Leagues, in providing for their support from municipal membership fees appropriated by town governments. They constitute a sort of third house in local government which may reach equal importance with agencies which are directly ordained by law.

The Disappearance of the Village. Taken altogether these wider agencies express the rich and varied social resources of the town's world. They furnish the scientific merging of experience, the standards and largely the experts which the single little town cannot furnish,

and which the group of little towns cannot develop. Community problems are not to be faced in isolation but with an active civilization at one's back. In view of this condition, the solemn re-discovery by social students of the essentially non-progressive character of the isolated village need fill no one with dismay.[5] To be sure its most forceful and inventive children are always moving away to the city. They go but to return in the constant stream of stimulating and fructifying influences which America is focusing upon the smaller communities. There need be no more villages in the earlier sense. The world can reach its towns if they will let it.

THE TOWN'S USE OF ITS RESOURCES

Deficiencies of Local Government. How idyllic the picture of the twelve thousand little towns of the nation, each working out its social destiny with the rich reenforcement of a helpful world! Somehow it does not entirely harmonize with the working conditions of American local communities. The little town is not as free nor can the political world be as helpful as if governmental forms more directly expressed the natural social relationships of the little town and its country. This, as has been repeatedly insisted, they signally fail to do. Our political institutions were formed in an age which dreaded government as an external compulsion, and which dared not trust it as an organ of social purpose. Local government followed the pattern of extreme decentralization which characterized national government. As it has turned out, multitudes of municipalities distributed through most of the area of

[5] Sims, "A Hoosier Village," p. 180 f.

the nation are under four jurisdictions—township, county and state officers having direct authority within their borders along with their own.[6] In each civil unit down to the smallest the division of responsibility tends to be exact and minute. Not only does the distinction between the executive, legislative and judicial departments of government obtrude into the civil machinery of the little town, but such matters as schools, libraries and public health are taken "out of politics" and delegated to other and various hands. In consequence there is a multitude of minor officials, all inexpert, performing small functions informally and incidentally while carrying on private vocations. They are generally honest and perform their duties with a maximum of human feeling. A Maine sea captain was elected tax collector in a rural town and sailed away leaving his duties to his daughter, then away at high school. She came home Friday nights and Saturdays and went from house to house, first presenting the tax bill; then, according to local etiquette going again and again to receive payment by instalments, if necessary. It sometimes took three visits to get forty cents, that being the tax rate on the family cow. Finally every cent would be collected. Such is actual government. The case fairly typifies the spirit and methods of thousands of local officials in all the civil units below the county, almost from the beginning of the nation. The county has another and less amiable story. Now civic improvement must use such officials as American local government furnishes. It must struggle with cumbersome and divisive machinery. It must work through a bewilder-

6 Fairlie, "Local Government," pp. 165–173.

ing variety of local officials, many of them not primarily elected by the town's people, nor directly amenable to civic purpose. It needs at least to be disentangled from this embarrassing complexity of jurisdiction.

Municipal Government. The little town's own machinery is an unintelligent imitation of that of state and nation. It does, however, intimately reflect civic purpose in certain forms. While the township or other officer is generally elected on the platform that he wants or needs the office, the mayor and councilman almost invariably go into office upon some measure of town policy,—a bond issue, an enforcement of the liquor laws, or the like. Frequently indeed, the civic issue is obscured by the question of which candidate is the better fellow; for town government is full of the flavour of personal relations. Nevertheless, here are clear beginnings of civic consciousness and purpose. While the other local officials are still performing routine functions in the light of unillumined personal honesty, the typical town official is compelled to reach something of community vision and gets a trace of that secondary social personality which makes him at least a possible agent of community betterment. It is by no means that he is the better man, but simply that he has the better backing. He represents a natural social unit, or rather the centre of one, and incarnates its spirit and ideals. He deals with centralized and easily visualized immediate issues involving the real exercise of community mind and will.

Commission Government. This conclusion implies some doubt as to the exceptional efficiency of the commission form of government for the little town. Its present vogue in America has swept it quite extensively

into the smaller municipalities; but by imitation rather than by real affinity for them. The essential merit of the commission is that it meets certain distinctive needs and corrects the most crying evils of city government. In cities, civic issues are so numerous and complicated, the community is so confused and changing, emergencies are so acute and frequent technical decisions so necessary that citizenship collapses under the burden and the ordinary elective representatives of the people are unequal to the task. The addition of an endless succession of departments and bureaus completes the catastrophe. The habitual bad government of American cities is both contributory cause and consequence of the general situation. Under such circumstances the centralization of responsibility in a few men who employ the experts necessary to operate the city's functions on a non-political basis, is a swift cutting of the Gordian Knot. But such conditions do not characterize the little town. Civic issues are relatively few, simple and capable of popular understanding, while the town business is largely within the capacities of the average man backed by community intelligence. Under these conditions a commission is no particular advance upon mayor and councilmen. It cannot command any other type of men for there are none; and where everybody knows everybody the extreme centralization of responsibility simply does not apply; it is an official fiction and a psychological impossibility. And even if it were otherwise, it is always better for a democratic community to deal directly with its own civic problems when it can get directly at them.

The Town Manager Plan. This plan on the contrary would seem to offer great possibilities to the little

town on the point where its local government most needs strengthening, namely, in expert technical training. While the town manager is an outgrowth of commission government as developed in the cities, it has no necessary connection with it—especially in its application to little-town conditions. It may as easily be added to the ordinary mayor and council régime as to the commission system. Both methods have been used by the rather limited number of little towns which have engaged managers up to date. Thus LeGrand (Oregon) has a commission of three members, one of whom is police judge and "town manager." The Iowa law of 1915 on the contrary allows the manager simply to be grafted onto the existing town government. Generalizations for forty-five cities and towns which have managers, indicate that the title is something of an overstatement; it is usually simply the business and engineering functions of city government which are committed to such officials, though sometimes the control of police is added. An engineer—possibly the manager of the municipal lighting plant, or a former school superintendent is the type of man so far usually chosen. In the little town the salaries run from twelve or fifteen to twenty-five hundred dollars.[7] This is immeasurably important as furnishing the possibility of one trained man who gives his entire time to the business of the town and who is presumably not concerned with partisan politics. A new profession, with exact standards of preparation, may in time grow out of it. It is hardly worth advertising, however, as a new system of local government and is surely no substitute for a general

[7] *The American City*, XII, p. 499 f.

diffusion of civic intelligence and devotion. "Managed" or not, the town will still reflect the average of its people's standards and aspirations.

Legal Powers of Little Towns. Beyond its administrative changes and developments, the machinery of town government is adapting itself in various ways to the growing sense of community needs and possibilities. The general tendency of American courts has been to allow government to take on a multitude of functions under the general welfare clauses of our constitutions. In sympathy with this tendency, communities are finding that they can do almost anything which they want to do and which is not objected to by a considerable minority. It requires only the assent of public opinion to include a playground in a park, or rooms for the women's clubs in a public library. Probably no one will say "no" after officials provide rest rooms for country women or offices for betterment organizations in a new town hall. In spite of the precision with which the law books define functions and powers of government, the informality of local government and the exercise of administrative discretion leave wide opportunities for civic betterment. States generally have responded rapidly with enabling legislation. Oregon permits towns to amend their own charters, which amounts to saying, "Do anything you please." In a few states—for example, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey, even the smallest towns may create town planning commissions—as yet with advisory powers only—and thus begin to control the physical future of the community. The mass of detailed legislation in similar lines is impressive. Missouri, for example, in 1915, besides

strengthening the powers of little towns to restrain animals running at large and to abate the smoke nuisance, conferred the right to issue bonds to help build county bridges beyond their corporate limits; also to appoint a visiting nurse to aid any anti-tuberculosis organization. This latter was made mandatory upon petition of a reasonable proportion of inhabitants. The former provision recognized the partnership of the town with the open country; the latter illustrated that interspheringing of civil and voluntary agencies noted in a former paragraph. All the more progressive states now permit a wide civic use of the public school plant. Thus, to quote Missouri again, the law of 1915 permits school authorities in all places of less than seventy-five thousand population to give free use of, and at discretion to furnish free heat, light and janitor service for "free discussion of public questions, for meetings of organizations of citizens, and for such other civic, social and educational purpose as will not interfere with the prime purpose to which such houses, buildings and grounds are devoted." The New York law includes agricultural, athletic, playground and social centre activities as proper uses of the school plant and authorizes school boards to engage supervisors for them out of school hours. Massachusetts is so inclusive as to lead a bulletin of its Civic League to declare that the people of that state may now use their school buildings and property "pretty much as they see fit." Kansas passed a free municipal band concert law in 1915, under which ten little towns spent from two hundred and fifty to six hundred dollars each during the first year. New Jersey recently defeated a constitutional amendment permitting muni-

cipalities to condemn land for public purposes in excess of immediate needs,—for example, the lots facing a park site. Such a right would hold for the community the unearned increment which would otherwise go to the chance individual owner; and is clearly the logical necessity if a town is to be able to determine its own physical plan.

Special Legislation. When general legislation fails, the resource of special legislation remains. This is not theoretically defensible, but in states having already many municipalities created by special charter it is not impossible nor unwise to get enlarged powers directly from the law-makers of the state. Thus Spring Valley, Wis., desiring to operate a town hall as a municipal amusement centre, and finding no warrant in law had recourse to a philanthropic private company, pending the enactment of permissive legislation. All told, what a town can do under the law depends pretty largely upon what it wants to do, and how deeply and genuinely it wants it. Thus, the extensive and almost dictatorial powers of local health officers were conceived in panic, and have been generally effective in times of fear. Backed by intelligent public sentiment, however, they may press far in many directions of community betterment. A well drawn fire ordinance may be the entering wedge in the replanning of a town. The model nuisance ordinance of the Kansas League of Municipalities illustrates the far reaching possibilities of ordinary police powers. Declaring that "whatever renders the ground, water, air or food hazardous to health" is a nuisance, it follows with specifications as to refuse, water pollution, manure, the keeping of stock, respon-

sibility for weeds; and ends with provision for the inspection of cesspools, manure pits and pig pens. With such resources, time and patience can achieve almost anything which popular will genuinely declares necessary.

A NEW BASIS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Need of a Natural Unit. If, however, the main contention of this book is true, namely that the natural community includes the town centre with the surrounding area which uses it as a trade and institutional centre, no powers which stop on the town limits can be adequate for the expression of the social purpose of the community. This is the radical problem of the proper unit of local government, which has emerged repeatedly in the previous discussion. At present the need is very inadequately sensed; but local government cannot for ever rest on a purely arbitrary basis. As government becomes a direct expression of popular will it must necessarily be operative by such units as can have a common social mind—that is by natural communities; if for no other reason because only by such communities will it be given financial support. As it is the community is deprived of the taxes of the part probably best able to pay. The farmer uses the town, but evades its civic responsibilities. It should be made more useful to him—so useful that he will be willing as well as compelled to pay the cost of extended local government.

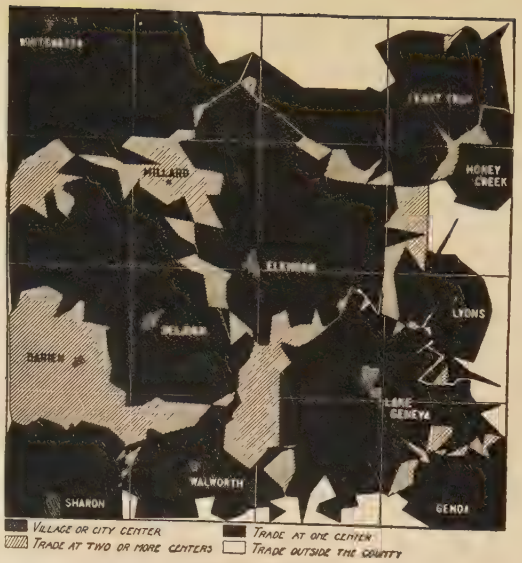
The Natural School District. In the realm of education the identification of the natural with the legal community is being realized to a considerable extent by

the union high school movement in its various forms. In many states the town has long had an independent school district somewhat larger than its municipal limits. It was patronized also by many country youth living beyond the district. These paid tuition in lieu of taxes, and were admitted or not at the pleasure of the town educational authorities. The next step was to authorize the township to pay the tuition for its high school pupils in the town school and to compel the school to receive them if it had room. Here many states stuck; the more progressive, however, have enacted union high school laws. Thus in Wisconsin any contiguous area of thirty-six square miles defined by section lines, may organize itself for high school support and maintenance. So far forth this allows the town centre to associate its dependent country with it in the secondary phase of education. But the trade area of a town of three thousand population in a Northwestern state with average density of population may be a hundred square miles instead of thirty-six. Minnesota therefore goes further: any county, upon petition of twenty-five per cent. of its residents, must appoint a county school survey commission which re-districts the county on the basis of actual communities. Education is thus freed from arbitrary political units and allowed to organize on a basis of geographical and social facts. The report of the commission with maps and diagrams then comes before the voters in a special election. Under this law Douglas County, for example—with twenty townships and six hundred and forty-eight square miles of area—reduced its eighty-four district schools to twenty-four, following in the main natural rather than township boundaries.

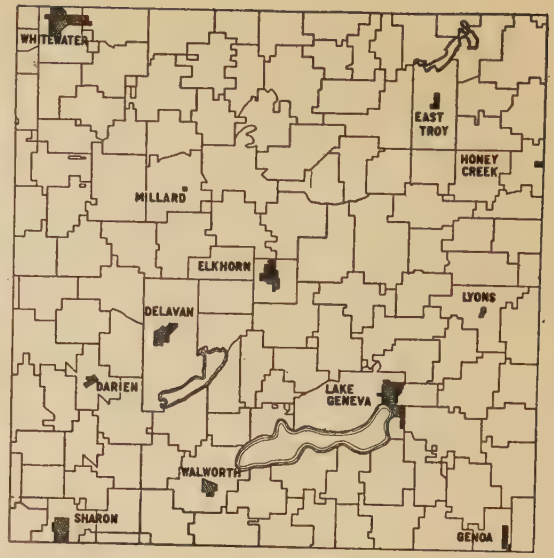
Commenting on the above case, Professor Cubberley observes, "If established in a little village, itself the natural centre of a rural community, such central schools can become the very centre both of the village and of the community life."[8] This feeling after the "rurban" clue to educational policy is significant, but its logic goes much farther. Douglas County has eight incorporated towns of over one hundred population. If its social anatomy were studied in the same way as that of Walworth County, Wisconsin in Chapter III,[9] it would be found to consist of not more than eight natural communities. The twenty-four present schools would fall into eight groups, giving an average of one central and two subordinate schools for each group. Within these large educational parishes, the separate schools would be related in ways similar to those of town and country churches discussed under the collegiate and sector-and-zone plans.[10] The survey method as the legal basis of educational organization will inevitably lead to this result. It must, however, not be bound by county lines. Oregon permits any area which chooses to do so, to detach itself from other high school relations and to set itself up as a high school district, even county lines being ignored. Its law enables the natural community exactly to define itself and to assume as a whole the burden of supporting its chief educational institutions.

Other Political Uses of the Natural Community. Now if this tendency is valid in the educational field

[8] Cubberley, "Rural Life and Education," p. 246 f.
[9] p. 61.
[10] p. 149.



Trade Areas



School Districts

NATURAL COMMUNITIES AS THE BASIS FOR EDUCATIONAL REORGANIZATION

why not also in others, in which equally the natural community includes the civic centre with its surrounding country? It is almost obvious that the administration of libraries should follow identical lines with that of high schools and that the library will find the high school its most natural and economical agency of circulation.[11] "The Richland Centre, Wisconsin commercial club raised forty-five hundred dollars last year and gave it to the township to improve country roads." Civic progress literature is full of such instances, as it should be. Certainly the road system of a town and its trade area are essentially one. None of its main arteries stop at the municipal limits. The township should no more support its roads alone than the town should support its high school. On the other hand, it is evident that the remoter parts of the trade-community will not want to centre their lives in the little town in all respects. The most ardent school consolidationist will not want to transport the smallest children eight or ten miles from the outskirts of the trade area. The secondary system of roads which links the remoter homes with their minor centres at the way-stations, country church, district school or creamery are not of equal importance to the entire community with the main travelled roads.

The Scientific Basis of Local Government. The ideal system of local government would be reached by determining by a scientific social survey, the extent of the natural community in its largest area, and then by establishing civic zones, the first ending with the side-

11 Dudgeon, *Administrative Units in Library Extension*, Bulletin American Library Association, CXXX.

walks and sewers, the second, say with the enlarged common school districts, and the third, with the farthest habitual trade boundaries. Each zone would have common government with respect to the functions which it has in common and to the degree that they are available to the entire population. Taxes would be graded from zone to zone and the outer zone would be subdivided into minor civil districts with special reference to the control and support of its minor centres. All three zones would be equally municipal and all equally and essentially rural. The town would reach out to the farthest home which uses its streets and institutions, and the country would reach clear into the town hall. The arbitrary inclusion somewhere of that minority of families which now use more than one trade- or ideals-centre would be no more arbitrary than what every one suffers from existing political divisions. The total arbitrariness of the situation would be reduced at least ninety per cent. In the early stages of organizing such local government the designation of this or that rival town as a municipal centre would be determined by popular vote as the selection of a county seat is now. If a mistake were made the same processes would rectify it as are now necessary to change a wrongly located county seat. All practical difficulties which beset any form of government would doubtless beset this, but it would be based on the natural structure of society, whereas present government is artificially based. Democracy cannot be locally expressed to good advantage until our minor civil units are freed from the surveyor's chain.

For the Immediate Future. While progress is be-

ing made with amazing rapidity, as the local government situation now stands in America, there is nothing to do but to sweep along the majority of undistinguished officials, with their brief authority, upon the main stream of popular civic intelligence. Jim is mayor this year, and Jim is just a little better or just a little worse than the rest of us. The series of Jims accurately strikes our average. So far as opinion goes, minor officials bob up and down like corks on a current. It is only the man of long tenure of influence (the occasional pastor or school superintendent, or more frequently the man who holds no office at all), who best incarnates the deeper forces of civic idealism and purpose.

THE UTILIZATION OF VOLUNTARY RESOURCES

Profusion and Confusion. The town's chief resource in organization, therefore, will be found in that group of voluntary agencies with a community outlook which expresses the unofficial social mindedness of the people. The helpful modern world presses such agencies in great profusion on the small community, but with their number and conflicting claims profusion indeed often becomes confusion. Some one has estimated that if the country minister should present all the "causes," observe all the special anniversaries and "days," and preach all the special sermons urged upon him by interests from outside his community, he would have time for nothing else. Now, the big world doubtless can use somewhere every form of helpful organization which exploits itself and asks local recruits and financial support. To the little town, however, they tend to become a clutter of unrelated and misadjusted distrac-

tions. Introduced by a national organization or Board, often through a paid organizer who sees in the community primarily another place to be possessed by his organization, they naturally culminate in jealousies and competition. Every self-respecting woman's magazine would gather its many readers into some far-flung order of Better Home Workers. Every enterprising farm journal promotes its private Agricultural Improvement League. There are Milk of Human Kindness Associations in plenty for the purpose of extending newspaper circulation. Insurance companies exploit public health movements. There are semi-fraternal "orders" ready to direct the lot of the local commercial organization. The town boy is striven for by several competitive brands of Scouts, and the allegiance of the Sunday-School teacher is disputed between denominational and other agencies. All told, the world's resources of community improvement have become to the little town what William James said the world must be to the new baby: "One big, blooming, buzzing confusion."

Principles of Selection. It is not the province of this book to recommend as between competing agencies for civic good. Rather, its fundamental contention is that there is no best which is wanted everywhere, and that the value of any proposed method of improvement depends upon local conditions. It is possible to point out, however, some helpful principles of selection.

Initiating Agencies. A study of a large number of community betterment movements reveals that there are four agencies of the little town which most commonly originate them: namely, the business men's organization, or the woman's club, or the school (or its alumni),

or the church. As things now stand, these are the accepted moulds through which individual intelligence and conscience seek to move the town forward. The man with civic vision goes to "Main Street" or to the women of the community, or to the school-"marms" and masters, or to the preachers. The effectiveness of what follows depends upon their wisdom in choosing and adapting from the many typical organizations which the age furnishes.

Standard vs. 'Freak" Organizations. The first aid to selection is the discovery that the multitude of organizations falls into a few recognizable types. They are not nearly so different as their names frequently sound. Nor is the latest civic novelty on the market always the best. The next important point is that some which are superficially alike differ in the soundness of their underlying pedagogy and the perfection of their technique. Great progress, for example, has been made in the last ten years in organizations for boys and girls. It can hardly be doubted that the Boy Scout idea contains the maximum which has yet been devised of wholesome appeal to boy nature on its many sides. It is as much ahead of the old tools for work with boys as the automobile is faster than the horse. Generalizing, it is safe to say that an organization is to be preferred just in proportion as it is pedagogically fundamental rather than superficial; as its character is typical rather than erratic; as its motive is single hearted rather than ulterior (in short, as it is free from the taint of financial profit), and as its scope is communal rather than sectarian or parochial. The leadership of the state and federal bureaus of agriculture is more reliable

than that of the farm journals. That of the universities is more unselfish than that of the trade journal. That of the state, is generally broader than that of the sectarian church. It is greatly to be desired that the little town learn to hitch up with what is really significant, fundamental, and altruistic.

Supplementary vs. Rival Organizations. Especially available and natural are those movements which supplement rather than rival or displace existing institutions, and which may be directly assimilated to the community as it is. Thus, the Parent-Teachers' Association links the home and the school in ways obviously helpful. The Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls join domestic and school duties with active boy and girl interests in their requirements for honours and insignia. Eighty-five per cent. of Scout organizations have been in connection with Sunday-Schools. Twenty-five per cent. of Scout masters are clergymen. The rural Y. M. C. A. movement has wisely resolved not to become a separate organization, and is content to report its work in the number of communities served and of men and boys influenced rather than by membership statistics. It assists and co-operates equally with the church and with commercial and agricultural betterment movements without seeking to introduce a separate organization of its own.

The Realm of Experiment and Adaptation. Such tools as have been developed for the service of the more advanced ideals of community betterment were implied in the study of the town's possibilities. Naturally, many of them are yet in the experimental stage, and their field of application presents many alternatives. It

is not to be desired that all communities seek and secure their ideals in the same ways. The community centre idea, for example, will be realized now through the school and in the schoolhouse, now through and in the church, and now through special organization, or by the town itself through the municipal hall.[12] In the larger little towns, it seems likely that a number of major community interests will have separate organizations, ultimately each with its special building and appropriate grounds and equipment. In towns of medium size, the chances are that it is better to concentrate upon the plant and property of the high school, making them available for the use of all the legitimate interests of all citizens. It thus becomes at once a community auditorium, a community centre, its playground, its library, and its civic forum. In the smallest village communities, it seems clear that common interest will ordinarily have to be content with a plain community hall standing between the church and the neighbourhood schoolhouse. Happily, the fields and forests are open and easily accessible to community uses. Yet, even here, alternatives are present. It may be better for the church to plan and erect its parish house so as to serve all the purposes of the community hall. The architecture of the village church is an important field for improvement. Or perhaps the additional cost of a community house had better go into the district school building, which by careful design and moveable partitions between rooms can be made available for both uses, rendering a sec-

[12] See *Rural Social Centers*, Bulletin University of Wisconsin, p. 234; Perry, *How to Start Social Centers*, Russell Sage Foundation Bulletin.

ond building unnecessary. That which under the circumstances secures the best result is the best arrangement. Nothing more can be said except in terms of the particular community.

IX

THE TOWN'S PROGRAM

PROGRESS WITHOUT A PROGRAM

Piece-meal Procedure. The things which it were well for the little town to do, as discussed comprehensively in former chapters, easily catalogue as fifty or so major civic tasks, the accomplishment of any one of which would mark an epoch in town progress. To initiate one of them would make a mayor's administration notable or a club president's term famous. To complete one of them might take years. As American towns are accustomed to handling civic problems it is pretty sure that these tasks would likely be undertaken as so many separate ones which would compete with one another for public interest and wreck one another if two or three were under consideration at the same time.

Furthermore it is probable that these fifty or more tasks would be broken up into two or three hundred separate projects, each the subject of ordinances or the occasion of circulating a subscription paper on Main Street.

Civic Energy Inefficiency Used. Recalling now that the typical little town has from twenty to forty organizations of different sorts available for its civic service it is clear that not only do interests compete, but that organizations must compete for people. Disregarding

the two-fifths of the population consisting of children or aged or incompetent folks and remembering how relatively few of even average human beings are actually efficient in organized effort, how many available workers will there be for each organization and each task? Manifestly the little town is going to be split up into organized groups too small for the performance of the larger common tasks. The faithful few are always overworked in lodge or board of trade as much as in church or women's club. Such division and waste of the town's human resources is fatal.

Imitation Without Adaptation. Furthermore most of the town's civic progress is due to the instinct of imitation. Some other place has made this or that improvement and the little town hears about it. It cannot distinguish between the concrete form and the typical significance. It, therefore, tends to follow a mode formed on another situation. Particularly is this true of civic progress as inspired by achievements exploited in books and magazines. In most cases it is the city whose civic progress is set before the little town to be emulated and the town is unable to reduce the problem to its own scale. Then there come the national organizers of movements and exponents of causes who fire the conscience but fail to apply their message to the town's particular circumstances.

"As Usual in America." Under such conditions fragmentary and detached civic victories are the rule. One can find a town, and probably more than one, where the women's club has erected a fountain in the public square through which stock ranges at large. The drippings of the fountain have become a hogwallow. The

most exploited cases frequently reveal how little the particular improvement just now on exhibition, has to do with the general life of the community. Their very photographs betray them. The public library or playground occupies the centre of the picture while all around the edges are the evidences of civic barbarism.

Begin with Something. On the one hand, fragmentary and detached progress is real progress. One must begin somewhere and unexpected consequences flow from it almost in the beginning. This is the lesson of the village improvement organizations of New England. Starting with a comparatively narrow interest in the incidental beautification of the communities they were driven back to the fundamental physical, sanitary and moral considerations, and thus out into a fairly comprehensive program of civic advance. All social problems are interrelated and to erect a fountain in the public square is to discover a reason for restraining stock.

Plan for Everything. On the other hand detached victories often spoil entire campaigns. The chief foe of fundamental civic betterment is not the thickskinned Philistine, but rather the man who plunges into superficial and unconsidered schemes; thus confusing the major tasks and dividing community interests. This point was never dealt with more fundamentally than by President Butterfield of the Massachusetts Agricultural College in the conference which fixed the place of the Young Men's Christian Association in the rural betterment field.[1] Contrasting the "Johnnie-on-the-spot" attitude with the "long-look-ahead" attitude, President

[1] Israel (ed.), "Unifying Rural Community Interests."

Butterfield showed how easily the petty leader, who brings the battle on too soon, may defeat the wisest plans of the great commander. The same devotion and energy which has gone into the service of the little town would have yielded a thousand fold more results had it been planned.

PROGRESS THROUGH A PROGRAM

There is fundamental need then of a program for little-town progress which shall be comprehensive, orderly and elastic, combining all the fundamental tasks which have emerged, and utilizing all the agencies under a single progressive, practicable scheme.

Advantage of a Manageable Unit. Such a program is possible. This is the beauty of the fact that the little town is little. The social betterment program of the Nation or of the great city is necessarily fragmentary because of the size and complexity of the field. None can even hope to comprehend all the problems and marshal all the forces. Profound social students are therefore crying out for some unit of endeavour in which the total social program may be worked out in completeness and proportion. "Let us really do the business," they say, "in some smaller area, thus proving that it can be done; then we shall return with more courage to our larger and more baffling tasks." Expressive of this tendency, the National Social Unit Organization has recently been formed. It attempts first to focus the collective wisdom of national experts on all social questions upon a single city of three hundred thousand population, and to spend one hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars simply as an example, in the attempt

to bring together existing agencies into a model program of community organization. Now the little town is exactly such a manageable unit as is being sought, within which it is possible for average people to plan and carry out a comprehensive community program inclusive of all the forces and tasks of social betterment.

Basic Principles: (1) Time. The principles upon which the community program in the little town must organize itself are those of time, scope, scale and relation. There is no better place to begin town improvement than in the planting of trees. First, because no single aspect of the community makes so great difference at so little cost or affects more people; and second, because good trees grow slowly and teach the fundamental lesson that time is a factor in any fundamental program of betterment and compels the long-look-ahead. Professor Waugh sets forth excellent typical programs for village improvement societies looking ahead one, two, three, five and ten years. Naturally any such projection of programs into the future must be very elastic. Nevertheless the effort to put the civic tasks of the community onto a large background and to see, theoretically at least, how they might well be worked out in an orderly manner through a series of years, is a most helpful discipline as well as a general guide to practice.

(2) Scope. It is a repetition to say that the comprehensive program for community betterment must take in the entire natural community including the town and its dependent rural area, and that it must include all classes of the community, reaching not only their problems but enlisting them in active efforts for a common solution. Many technically accurate surveys, however,

have largely missed the mark by being based on an artificial area which did not correspond to the vital social relations, and many a program of the "best" people has failed because the community consists of all the people, and in the most fundamental matters must be moved in its entirety or not at all.

(3) Scale. Perhaps the sharpest test of a comprehensive program is that of working it out and keeping it within the scale of little-town possibilities and those of the particular size and type of little town for which the program is made. Even the effort of this book is to state modestly what the little town may aspire to, will stir concrete imaginings far beyond the actual powers of multitudes of the smaller places. Yet every one of the fifty major tasks has its version affecting the least municipality. No one of them may be omitted except at extreme social and moral peril. The four or five distinct types of playground and amusement centres which the big city demands, must somehow be satisfied by the picnic ground and the pasture lot, yet every recreational need of every class in the community must be sensed and met as faithfully as in New York City. He will be a wise and courageous man who knows how to express the fundamental ideals of collective life in the term of the little and often stagnant community, and to stir and keep enthusiasm for such modest improvements as are humanly possible.

(4) Relation. The final test of the comprehensive program is its ability to see and keep things in relation. There are no scales in which to weigh absolutely the relative importance of the major social tasks of the community. All are essential and no one can be omitted.

Yet from day to day and from year to year a choice must be made between what is more or less important for the time being. The fundamental must come before the superficial, although the superficial may be used to sugar-coat the issue on the platform, or at the polls.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Simplification by Co-ordination. There is no way of realizing such a comprehensive program except by having an organization to put it into effect. That this means an additional organization in a community already oversupplied makes no difference. This organization is in the interests of simplicity. It is essentially an agency of co-ordination which makes the many existing agencies act together as though they were once. Counting the names and enumerating the officers of organizations never signifies. The whole question is, Do they act separately or do they act together? In the latter case, the agency which unifies them reduces rather than adds to their number. Because it does unite existing organizations it is natural to name the new community-wide organization a "league." Thus Hartman [2] cites a case of a league for social service in New England which federates twenty-eight existing community organizations. Each of them is a member of the comprehensive league, paying annual organization dues into its treasury and continuing its peculiar work within the inclusive organization.

Direct and Indirect Functions. The inclusive organ-

[2] *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, XV, p. 234.

ization may possibly need to undertake and direct certain parts of the comprehensive program not already expressed by existing organizations. It will be wholesome to have some direct responsibilities and to fill in the gaps which are likely to be found in a community which has grown up haphazard and which is divided between agencies which have never tried to work together and to cover the whole ground. It will want to keep the functions of investigation and survey, and of the annual summary, exhibit and measuring of civic progress in its own hands. In the main, however, the chief virtue of the new organization is that it does co-ordinate existing agencies, pointing out where the gaps are and suggesting to this one or that that it expand its fields so that they will cover every task. Equally where the present organizations are competing with one another within the same field it will use its good offices to see that, so far as possible, duplication of effort ceases. The little towns are already richly supplied with organizations which want to help. The new organization simply interprets to them the comprehensive community program and shows each how it may best take its place in carrying out the same.

Variables and Constants. In its details the organization of the community league may well differ from town to town. When a few fundamentals are secured there is no reason for uniformity. It is important, however, that individual membership should be representative of all classes in all parts of the community and that it should be based on some particular participation in community betterment. Let the league be easy to get into, but hard to stay in, except for those who are actually doing

something for their own town year by year. The degrees and honours long used by secret orders and which are now popularized in the Boy Scouts' and Camp Fire Girls' organizations may well be adapted to civic improvement organizations. In a farmers' organization for the improvement of home surroundings fostered by the horticultural department of the University of Illinois an Australian ballot is used, on which farmers pledge to undertake a particular project within a given time with the help of the department. Similarly in the little town, membership in the community league might continue so long as a member would undertake one or more of a specified number of betterment projects which could be carried out individually or by families. At the end of the year his success should be judged and he should receive corresponding honour or recognition. Should he cease to do some practical work in community betterment no amount of money should be able to buy him membership in the league.

Working the Plan. Similarly, organizations having membership in the league should be allowed to hold it so long as they should actually accept responsibility for some particular form of community service adapted to them. At the end of the year their results should be judged and a suitable honour conferred upon them. The rating and recognition of the work of a church, a women's club or of even a commercial organization should be decided by a competent jury of the most influential citizens of the little town, whose verdict would be a tremendous tonic and challenge to faithfulness and efficiency.

The Crucial Point. The leadership of the community

league is of extreme importance. Formally it must doubtless include the executives of all the participating organizations, organized as a sort of executive council for community enterprise. With these various presidents and other officials must be included certain official representatives, say of the town government and of the school board, together with the local magistrate and a county administrator. Simply getting together the various people who are responsible for the different lines of community work, will lead to better mutual understandings, the quickening of interest and something of a common program.

Natural Leadership. Nothing of this sort, however, can succeed merely as a combination of officials and functionaries. There must be a dominant personal leadership for which there can be no direction or formula. In every community, however, there are natural leaders, some of whom will be community-minded and will have cast in their lots permanently with the town. At best, unless organization enlists natural leaders of the permanent sort it will be futile and short-lived. For this reason the preacher and school superintendent who are merely using the little town as a stepping stone to professional advancement, for all their fine notions of community betterment, hinder as often as they help. They are necessarily in a hurry,—they haven't time to work out a fundamental program. The rewards of medicine and law on the contrary are usually cumulative just in proportion to the time they have been practised in a given community. The doctor and the lawyer then are natural community leaders.

The Salt of the Earth. It is to them, therefore, with

the community-minded business man, who has invested his all in the town and couldn't get his money out if he wanted to; to the old "first" families who are really first in sense of civic responsibility and who know their place or can be taught it in the democratic scheme; occasionally to the editor; and especially to the fine type of competent women who regard the town as a whole maternally,—that the town must look for the continuous initiative, patience and intelligence necessary to work out its program. Happily or unhappily the available number of natural leaders is sure to be reduced because temperamentally they cannot all work together. Finally the number will be small. Indeed it need not be large. If Sodom had been a little town its righteous would have been enough. Just because the little town is little, it only takes a handful of moderately able, teachable, cooperative and eternally persistent folks to realize almost any program. One average man with the right clue, reasonable tact and forty years of time can make over his community. And there are only twelve thousand little towns in the United States!

COOPERSBURG: AN EXAMPLE

A modest but capital illustration of a little town discovering and working to a program through a comprehensive organization, and with instinctive recognition of the foregoing principles is that of Coopersburg, a conservative old Pennsylvania "Dutch" town in the eastern part of the state. Ninety-eight per cent. of the whole population is of German descent with a tradition of individual rather than of social virtues. The recent story of this community has been summarized by the

Secretary of the Moravian Country Church Commission.

Co-operating for Coopersburg. In January, 1914, a group of citizens, originally brought together by one of the churches, issued a call for a community meeting to discuss plans for solving the problems presented by a little town of seven hundred and fifty souls. The meeting was unexpectedly enthusiastic; and in consequence a Neighbourhood Association was formed with the following committees: Industrial, Recreation, Civic Improvement, Health and Hygiene, Home and School, and Publicity. It was designed to have a central organization working through committees, and flexible enough to meet any community need as it arose. Everything was to be co-ordinated in a strong community association issuing only one financial appeal for all needs, on the basis of committee budgets. Churches, lodges, business men and school interests were represented on the various committees and thus all are bound together with a common purpose. The community had been strikingly narrow and sectarian and the formation of the Association was the first general socializing experience that it had ever had.

The plain, unvarnished tale of the transformation of Coopersburg within about two years and of the methods and fortunes of the sub-agencies which wrought it out, shows nothing which might not be duplicated in any town—except probably, unusual quality of leadership. The wealth of unused resources awaiting mobilization by the community is typical rather than exceptional.

Conservative Economic Plans. "The Industrial Committee avoided the temptation to bring in new and not

too substantial manufacturing concerns, knowing that the town had an insufficient number of houses for its present needs. Efforts were put forward to secure more dwellings and these met with some success and still more houses are going up in the coming months. The committee also organized a Building & Loan Association with a capital of half a million dollars. This is now successfully at work. A special effort was made to enlist young men in the ranks of the stock-holders and in this way many have become regular savers." The committee has also "performed the usual functions of a Board of Trade, advertising the community, seeking to bring the farmers to it, making it more of a centre for the shipping of produce, and similar things. A public spirited citizen placed at its disposal a large tract of land that is being offered for free factory sites. In this way the Association can largely control the type of industries hereafter to be admitted to the community. It is also wisely aiding present industries to expand instead of bringing in new concerns too quickly."[3]

Finding a Basis in Facts. The Civic Improvement Committee's first and comprehensive work was to take the social census of the community. This task was carried out by an expert of the Presbyterian Department of the Church and Country Life in close co-operation with the Moravian Country Church Commission. The facts discovered were such as any divided and socially neglectful little town might have expected. They made Coopersburg cringe. The Association leaders, however, felt new strength through precise knowledge of conditions. "A village surveyed," they declared, "is a vil-

[3] Brunner, "Co-operation in Coopersburg."

lage unafraid." The Civic Improvement Committee turned especially to the erection of a hopeful communal spirit. The very formation of the Association had helped this greatly. In addition, the committee carried on contests for a Coopersburg slogan, a community motto, a hymn, and town colours. Coopersburg has now the symbols to express the faith that is in her. When the railroad station was slightly damaged by fire the committee, co-operating with the station agent, was enabled to secure additional conveniences in the repaired depot as well as the promise of a new station in the near future.

Obvious Relations Rediscovered. The Home and School Committee soon came to perform all the functions of a Parent-Teachers' association. Its meetings have been most helpful in the creating of co-operative feeling between the school and the town. Electric lights were installed in the schoolhouse by community gifts. A May Day celebration arranged by this committee in connection with the Recreation Committee, marked an epoch in the town's social history, and will be an annual affair.

Difficulties from Traditionalism. The Recreation Committee soon found that a revolution would be necessary in the established views of the community before the profounder phases of its program were possible. "If it's exercise you want, why don't you go and chop wood? That's all I used to play when I was a boy," was reported as expressing the typical attitude. The committee has not been idle, however, in following some of the immediate suggestions in the survey. It has co-operated closely with the orchestra, band, Boy Scouts,

and glee club. A number of home talent minstrel shows and plays were held and a few star outside attractions brought into the town. The baseball team was assisted and a large tract of land adjoining the High School leased, with privilege to buy, as a baseball field. A community picnic ground of several acres donated by a public-spirited citizen, has also been developed through this committee.

Opposition of Individualism. The Health and Hygiene Committee also found a large task of education ahead of it before much of its program, in its larger features, could be accomplished. This educational work, however, has been carried on consistently. Clean up days have been held each spring, with the enthusiastic co-operation of the Boy Scouts. Health items are printed weekly in the town's newspaper and health literature is distributed free, especially that dealing with rural sanitation and starving the fly. There have also been lectures on health topics by members of the State Health Board.

The Springs of Motive. The functions of the Religious and Morals Committee have been performed thus far by the Executive Committee of the Association. Its work has been one of the most worth-while features of the Association's activity. Noted rural workers have spoken at community mass meetings. Life decisions have been made as a result of some of the addresses made. The constant effort is to keep strong and clear the religious impulse and motive that is back of the whole work. It is held that there can be no completely saved community life that does not include every feature of the community's work and play; that it is as

important to Coopersburg that it has the right sort of industries, houses, health, recreation and schools, as that it has the right sort of churches. The committee does not believe it can have any one without having all the others.

The New Spirit. The chief result of this experiment in neighbourhood work, as judged by one of its leaders, has been "the welding together of the community. Coopersburg was once branded even by its own citizens as 'slow,' 'conservative,' 'hopeless,' 'pessimistic.' Today the spirit is decidedly optimistic. The citizens are really true to their motto, 'Co-operate for Coopersburg.' They have small patience for criticism that is not constructive. They believe in the slogan that characterizes the community as 'The Town of Possibilities.' This message to similar communities that may chance through these pages to learn of this work is, 'Go, and do likewise.' 'All things are possible to him that believeth.' 'This is the victory even our faith.' "[4] Interpreting the deeper realms of motive, the writer of the above account adds that, while a church initiated the community movement, co-operation between the churches as such had been and was impossible. It became possible only in terms of community service. Religion indeed was the inspiration, but it had to enter a new sphere before it could reach and convert the churches as distributors. If not more religious than the churches, the community was at least more religious in certain important ways which the churches could not realize for themselves nor command for others, except through the medium of a community program. The

[4] Brunner, "Co-operation in Coopersburg," p. 94.

right program released the new spirit, combining community loyalty, religion and service.

Civic Monuments to the New Spirit. The experience of Coopersburg shows finally how inevitably quickened community life demands external expression in some central place of beauty and of common ideals,—a civic centre with its buildings and facilities, a temple of religion in its community aspects. Thus Mr. Brunner continues,—

"The Association as such is looking forward to two steps as the crown of the program—steps by means of which much of what is now planned for may be easily accomplished."

Park and Playground. "The possibilities for a community park of rare beauty and usefulness can be readily seen by even the casual observer of the High School grounds. To the left of the school is the baseball field already leased by the Association. From it, on the left, is a view of beautiful farm lands bounded by a low range of mountains which receives a nightly kiss from the westering sun. Back of the school is a meadow with its large pond on one shore of which is a cluster of trees. Here the boys and girls could swim and skate under proper supervision. On the right side of the school are the tennis courts, volley ball and croquet fields, as well as space for a Neighbourhood House. Someday soon the Association hopes to own this land or to secure it for the school and have its possibilities for recreation and study used to the full under the auspices of the Board of Education practically all of whom are members of the Association."

The Neighbourhood House. "This will stand near to

the school—its constant assistant and complement. The sketches for this building have already been prepared. It will be a simple but spacious and substantial building containing place for basket ball and other winter recreations, the floor space for these to be convertible into the floor of an auditorium for lectures, plays, etc. There will be a small but complete stage at one end. Committee rooms, dressing rooms, reading rooms, and a rest room for farmers' wives will be provided. In the basement there will be a place for Domestic Science and Manual Training. The building will also furnish a place for band and orchestra practice and a wing can be built for the fire company. To the rear will be free horse sheds for the farmers. The location near the school, the baseball field, playground and pond is well nigh ideal."[5]

Coopersburg's Five Year Program. It is the privilege of every little town to receive its own kiss from the westering sun. The foregoing story has been told largely in quotation in order to preserve its human qualities, its fine flavour of devotion and enthusiasm without which no program can avail. At the same time Coopersburg would be first to confess that much of its success, and much indeed of the permanence of the new and fine community spirit, is directly due to a definite program based upon the survey of 1914, which is expected to be accomplished within five years; as follows,—

Industrial Committee. (1) Secure more houses. (2) Secure more industries of the right sort. (3) Encourage and advertise present industries. (4) Provide

[5] Brunner, "Co-operation in Coopersburg," p. 80.

an attractive label to be placed on all goods that are shipped. (5) Organize a local industrial fair. (6) Open a market for farmers and try to make Coopersburg a city source of supply for products. (7) Provide horse sheds for farmers. (8) Provide rest rooms for farmers' wives. (9) Call public attention to industrial anniversaries. (10) Push Building & Loan. (11) Establish school bank to cater to children's accounts. (12) Interest trolley and railroad companies in Coopersburg.

Recreation Committee. (1) Plan for the supervision of play to a certain extent. The object of this is to obtain recreation together with physical development and to teach co-operation and morals. (2) Fit up a small playground with swings, tennis courts, quoits, etc., and make provision for swimming and skating. (3) Make a program for the year. Divide the year into months, have all the organizations work together and distribute their social efforts through the year, not neglecting sport days, picnics, suppers, patriotic days, church socials, and the like.

Home and School Committee. (1) Co-operating with school board finish and enlarge both school and grounds. (2) Introduce night school courses. (3) Push plans to have a Public School library. (4) Plan a community reading course. (5) Make school worth while for farm children. (6) Suggest and provide mottoes for homes and school. (7) Emphasize higher education.

Civic Improvement Committee. (1) Develop a loyal borough spirit, getting a Coopersburg yell, song and pennant. (2) Write up history of town. (3) Get together a good collection of views. (4) Beautify homes

and streets. (5) Plan for Farmers' Institute. (6) Have an Old Home Week. (7) Celebrate borough anniversaries, as coming of railroad or trolley, founding of Neighbourhood Association, etc.

Health Committee. (1) Continue to print health articles in paper. (2) Continue clean-up days. (3) Guard water supply and wells. (4) Plan for sewage disposal. (5) Introduce physical culture into school. (6) Enforce quarantine regulations. (7) Guard food supplies, sources of meat and vegetables, condition of shops, etc. (8) Secure health displays. (9) Have public health talks. (10) Get literature from state and national governments for distribution.

Religious and Morals Committee. (1) Seek to unify church efforts. (2) Cultivate church attendance. (3) Enlarge religious investment. (4) Celebrate religious anniversaries, sometimes with Union services, getting out attractive programs. (5) Hold country church conferences for the many churches near here. (6) Publish religious monthly, possibly taking over Moravian News and printing news from churches, Neighbourhood Association, etc. (7) Organize ministers' association. (8) Organize laymen's organization of the boards of the local churches. Perhaps this committee should be the men on these boards.

ORGANIZING A COMMUNITY PROGRAM

How to Go at It. When the men of Coopersburg sat down to organize their list of nearly fifty common tasks into a comprehensive program, how did they proceed? Naturally in the habitual American fashion, by appointing committees for each of the outstanding departments

of civic endeavour, each corresponding to a dominant social aim. But how did they know that they were right? How did they answer the questions: What sub-committees shall there be? What shall each be called? What shall their duties be? Where will one assign this or that task which does not obviously belong to any of them? Of course Coopersburg did not work in vacuum. Civic betterment never does. Its tools are largely already forged for its hand. It deals with departments and agencies of already existent government and largely with long-established institutions, which it attempts to work with in practical ways. There are established habits in civic processes. In practice, their departments of endeavour will indirectly reflect these facts. On the other hand, logic is power in the long run. The unequal yoking of incongruous lines of activity means permanent friction and strain. Any program maker will at least try instinctively to keep like things together.

Criticizing Coopersburg. In view of these considerations it is possible to ask whether the Coopersburg method of organizing its community program was best even for Coopersburg. Including the total program within six or seven comprehensive departments was clearly right, and the choice of and division of work between departments is immensely suggestive. At the same time it is not quite an ideal program. Many current community betterment interests have not yet emerged in Coopersburg. Does not the work of the Civic Improvement Committee seem a sort of catch-all for miscellaneous interests? What obvious affinity is there between the mood which makes a scientific survey and that

which invents a Coopersburg yell? The Farmers' Institute project, which this committee assumed, had to do with economic development and more naturally belonged in a common department with the work of the Industrial Committee. In brief, there is a real problem of classification which has more than theoretical importance.

A Model Program. The following suggestion is offered as a fair compromise between logical division and experience based upon habit and convenience. Anything the little-town civic program should include may be made at least to come within seven departments:

(1) Community plan and public improvements.

(2) Economic welfare; agricultural, commercial, industrial.

(3) Health, sanitation and housing.

(4) Public morals, law enforcement; charity and correction.

(5) Education.

(6) Recreation.

(7) Religious co-operation and civic worship.

These departments are intended to cover the entire range of little-town possibilities set forth in chapters five, six and seven. It will be observed that the first four correspond to the four "structural fundamentals" of chapter five. If they are really fundamentals, this is of course natural. They could not avoid being direct and permanent objects of endeavour. They use all agencies, touch all institutions, involve all ideals. Education, recreation and religion are groups of practical activities and institutions which gather together and sum up the further interests which men ought to have in common. The ideals discussed in chapter seven concern

all departments of endeavour and will attach themselves especially to one or another by natural affinity or present convenience. There is no sanctity, however, about the above formulation. All that is urged is that, as a practical basis for organized effort, everything the little town wants to undertake community-wise must be systematically comprehended in a small number of working categories.

THE STATE AS THE TOWN'S PROGRAM-MAKER

A Universal Community Program. The helpful service of the town's world to local development has already been noted in two phases. In the first place, it affords the towns a varied, though often indiscriminate, array of the tools of community progress. Second, it offers and necessitates certain established modes of social activity making in the same direction. But the world has now gone beyond these phases. It has now reached a comprehensive social purpose which makes communities as such the objects of its constructive politics and seeks to realize a unified and complete program of development in each one of them. It has definitely emerged as a function of the modern socialized state to be a program-maker for its towns. It is the state's business to cover the country with Coopersburgs.

The University. The natural eye of the state for seeing the community vision steadily and seeing it whole, is the University. Several of the more progressive middle and western states, usually through various bureaus of the extension departments of their universities, have gone far toward becoming program-makers for their towns. They have passed over from the teaching of

individuals to the teaching of communities. It is indeed a far cry from the correspondence studies of the aspiring student here and there, which was the first service of these departments, through the stage of sending out a miscellaneous lot of informing and popular lecturers, to the inspiring and ambitious program of schooling the towns as such in all the better lessons of collective life. What Wisconsin is ready to undertake by way of their education in all things municipal has already been catalogued.[6] It includes charters, ordinances, finance and accounting, engineering, and sanitary matters; and equally in the realm of community betterment through voluntary organizations of citizens,—social centres, the wider use of the school plant, rural life organization, and the like. This state has begun, through a series of local institutes, to offer community instruction in advertising and the display of goods for the sake of the thousands of little-town retail merchants and aspires to play the part of a commercial club secretary to its smaller communities.[7] She is prepared to furnish the information necessary both by specific replies and advice for all inquirers, and by sending out package libraries on public questions, and is seeking to follow up information by inspiration through the promotion of community music as a power to melt and fuse the hearts of men into one.

Summary of Services. In 1911-12, one hundred and twenty-eight Wisconsin cities were thus supplied with municipal guidance and one thousand six hundred and seventy-eight subjects, and two thousand four hundred

[6] Chapter VIII, p. 189.

[7] Gillin, "Community Development and the State University,"—*Town Development*, August, 1914, p. 99.

and fifty package libraries on public questions were sent out to three hundred and thirteen communities. Two hundred and twenty-five requests for information and advice concerning social centres and constructive community betterment plans were answered, fifty Boards of Education and like administrative bodies conferred with, and hundreds of addresses delivered in behalf of community progress. In 1915, the Municipal Research Bureau of the University of Kansas served one hundred and sixteen towns—one-half of the number having less than two thousand population each—on three hundred and thirty-three matters. Forty-four ordinances were drafted, one hundred and eight legal questions answered, and engineering data furnished in all cases, and the campaign for larger legal powers for small municipalities was vigorously backed. Washington and Oregon have less developed but similar agencies. What with these and the frequent educative and administrative pressure of state boards of health upon the little towns, —what with increasing control and definiteness of program on the part of state departments of education, the growing purpose of the modern state is manifest to help, supervise, and exact standard results from the communities upon which it confers corporate powers. To all of them, it will doubtless grant wider and wider privileges of self-government and new spheres of action; but the larger cities will doubtless seek their own way, while it remains to the state directly and especially to be the civic shepherd of the little towns.

Requirements for Incorporation. There is no logical reason why the state should not demand of new towns that they show their ability at the outset of municipal

careers to meet the minimum requirements of community life. A speculator, assuming inside information as to the plans of a railway, has no inherent right to buy up a series of town sites, to attract a few settlers by false representations, and to acquire easy municipal powers from the state for a series of experimental communities lacking all sound economic basis. Not even a town community growing naturally out of the country and needed to serve the country, is entitled to organize with special civic powers under the state's authority, without a reasonable conception of its municipal duty, some use of the experience of others, a rational plan approximating some definable model as to scale and type, proper sanitary facilities and regulations, and other adequate ordinances and resources of municipal housekeeping. The state already conditions incorporation, usually upon the number of inhabitants; but there are considerations which come far ahead of mere size. As to these, the state has every reason to erect tests and to exact guarantees. A Commission on Incorporation empowered to examine and pass upon the fitness of communities desiring incorporation would logically complete the state's exercise of its function as program-maker for its towns.

THE CHURCH AS THE TOWN'S PROGRAM-MAKER

The Shepherding of Communities. The state has passed over from the exclusive educating of individuals to the educating of communities as such. Should not the church likewise pass over from the exclusive saving of individuals to the saving of communities as such? If, having saved them, the constructive task of the church local is the shepherding of individuals, may not the con-

structive task of the church collective be the shepherding of the communities; or shall the state shepherd the little towns, and the church harry them? It has harried them in the past—by sectarian rivalry, by social divisiveness, by economic exploitation. How can it be otherwise so long as the state is one and the churches many and competitive, and so long as denominational aims and ambitions are in direct conflict with a unified program of community advance? Of course, no one in America wants a religious counterpart of the political state,—an authoritative church, however right and up to date, wielding the spiritual sword, and reducing communities as individuals to unquestioning obedience. But this is not the alternative. What is necessary and possible is that there be some democratic, voluntary, and effective expression of the common stock of impulse, ideals, and methods, which are actually possessed by the churches collectively. These must be organized and expressed in such a way as shall offer a common Christian evangel and a common Christian program to communities as such. Whatever group of forces and agencies actually affords such an evangel and such a program may fairly and deliberately be called the church, at least in the social sense.

The Social Gospel. Now, such a church is actually in the making as a shepherd to the community. First, by its better theology,—because the religious thinking of the age not only permits but compels the Christian man to regard the community as a specific object of his concern. It is such an object to him because he feels it is such an object to God. Christianity has always strongly insisted that the family is a

divine institution ordained and consummated by God. The same logic insists on the divine institution of the city, and—within the field of our discussion—of the town-and-country. He who set the solitary in families, set families also in communities, and indissolubly welded the little town and its surrounding farm land into one natural unit of community and religious experience. First, then, by a social gospel the church is becoming a shepherd to the communities.

Co-operative Organization. This is the second great contribution of the modern church to its towns. The co-operative and federative movements of American Protestanism have their most effective expression in the Home Missions Council, an organization including more than thirty denominational boards of national scope. These boards control five-sixths of the missionaries working in the fifteen northwestern and western states, which include practically all of our remaining frontier, and constitute the most rapidly developing area of the nation. Beneath the specific agreements as to policy declared by this Council and accepted by its constituent denominational boards, is the fundamental principle that the good of the local community gives the law to all religious organizations working within it.

The State as a Parish. How it actually works out in practice on a large scale is illustrated in western Washington, where the co-operating Mission Boards are united in a district organization of the Home Missions Council. The district covers nineteen counties of the state, and the policies determined for it are based upon a religious survey taken in 1912 of about one thousand of the one thousand one hundred and sixty-five school districts in

these counties. The survey concerned a school population of 169,598 children, and a total population of 732,-291. The results of the survey indicated that approximately seventy thousand people in the area studied were without adequate religious privileges, but that on "the other hand there were some villages and towns, and even country communities, which were over-churched; competing churches frequently being sustained by missionary money and engendering strifes in their communities."[8] As a result of the survey a Continuation Committee was appointed to readjust and reapportion overlapping territories between co-operating denominations. The committee is, of course, purely advisory, but in 1915 the committee reports several cases of readjustment of competitive churches and that in no case has there been failure to comply with its recommendations.

The Community Church. The constructive achievement of the committee is the first clear definition by a joint agency of the Protestant denominations of a community church in connection with some particular denomination but so broadened in its terms of membership and its work "as to include all Christians living in that community without estranging or violating any conscience." "Specifically the community church is understood to be a body of Christians worshipping in a certain district, representing all denominations co-operating with the Home Missions Council, and affiliated with one of the separate denominations but affording fellowship and Christian privilege for every Christian within its reach." Christians, who by reason of conscientious

[8] "Statement of Principles," Home Missions Council of Western Washington.

adherence to the peculiar doctrine or polity of their own denomination cannot unite in full membership are to become associate members. "By this plan, persons may retain membership in their own denomination, be regularly reported to it, send their benevolent contributions to its boards, and yet co-operate with the local work and help sustain it, both with service and financial support. The interests of the community should not be injured nor hindered by our differences of opinion; the religious life of the community is as important as any other factor, and every person ought to promote it. An associate member does not necessarily endorse the doctrines of the denomination carrying on the enterprise, nor assume official responsibility in the local organization, but as it is convenient and opportunity affords should work on committees, in the Sunday School and elsewhere." Any community church organized on this basis is promised recognition and support by the Home Missions Council against possible sectarian rivalry. In towns where an over-supply of denominational churches already exists, the committe recommends a plan for a systematic and co-operative working of the entire surrounding rural area in essential harmony with the suggestions of chapter six of this book. Thus, the over-churched town ceases to be over-churched by including its tributary country in its aggressive religious ministries.

Still More Inclusive Federation. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, through its Commission in Federated Movements, has inaugurated a still more comprehensive plan for federating in the local community not merely for the denominational churches but the interdenominational agencies like the Y.

M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. and the interdenominational Sunday School movements. Ultimately it hopes to work down to the small communities with practical measures along this line. The restraining and directing power of the ideal, however, outruns the creation of machinery to express it. The most that can be said is that the adequate idea is well established in a thinking of American Protestantism, that conspicuous and successful examples of its application to large areas are now available, and that the agencies for its further development and application are in the making. The church, in so far as it has embraced the community as such as an object of religious service, is in the way of standing side by side of the state as a program-maker for its little towns.

THE TOWNS THE MAKERS OF THEIR OWN DESTINIES

A Farm Under Every Farm. The first general evidence of mental maturity in the American people has been their recent sudden realization of the superficial character of the preliminary conquest of their land. So far, it has been the hasty taking of first values. Agriculture and industry skimmed the surface of the continent. The plow but scratched the soil. Millions of precious metals went into the dump heap. An untold wealth of forest was burned as an obstruction—merely to clear the land. The first comer took what was easily gotten and passed on to other virgin fields. But now the free land is exhausted and the mood and habits which its presence wrought are as out-of-date as the ichthyosaurus. To the nation under this perplexing necessity of changing its whole attitude toward natural wealth, the great word of the new agriculture sounds out: "Go deeper.

There's a farm under every farm." The entire continent is to be conquered anew—intensively. We are to re-mine the tailings, to utilize every by-product, to "gather up the fragments," human as well as material. The conservationist's conscience has arrived, and with it the conservationist's enthusiasm.

The Town Under Every Town. The social re-conquest of the continent is no less universally necessary than its material reconquest. No ancient moral value is equal to the needs of the present hour; all must take on profounder versions. The cup of cold water only which neighbourliness gave in such beautiful simplicity must now, we insist, be pure water in a clean cup. Friendliness is hedged about with social responsibility and can only free herself again by going deeper into human relations and finding spontaneity and joy on profounder levels. On such levels the heart thrills again with new vision of old lands; energizes at the task of rebuilding old commonwealths; rejoices in the re-direction of ancient forces. There is new capacity of enthusiasm for old causes and romance in the re-discovery of old continents. This is the second phase of our American battle for civilization. It holds the destinies of our smaller communities as it holds those of the nation itself. There's a town under every town. To find it is no superficial task. Really to get down into it, to unlock its possibilities, to release its powers is the meaning of community betterment.

A Faith Affirmed. Those who mean by a community betterment precisely the making over of the American people—and no less—must confess that they stake their all upon the capacity of the nation for a general and

genuine civic revival. The question is, can the impulse to make the common life better be universalized and fixed as a dominant characteristic of our land and our time? Can it be democratized, so that, whoever initiates it, whether state or church; by whatever advocates and experts it is mediated, the communities will seize upon it and make it indigenous, stamping it with their own spontaneity and originality? To answer affirmatively is an act of sheer faith. Evidence for this faith is not, however, wholly unseen. It rests partly in the clearly marked civic movement now going on in limited spheres, but also in the remarkable and surprising response to civic motive on the part of most unpromising communities whenever it is adequately and enthusiastically presented. Whenever one has said in his heart of some sodden Littleton, "Here at least it will not work," his doubts have been given the lie by some man of courage who tried and made it work. Those who have tried longest and most devotedly are sure that the surface phenomena of our community life are underlaid with vitalities waiting to be released. There is strength in the sub-soil of the common life. Where Uncle Robert and Aunt Mary lived so truly and died so devoutly—and both so futilely had they to do it over again in the same way—there are roots of personal character which may be cultured into civic virtue. The general revival of civic life waits only upon efficiently organized and universalized presentation of the ideal to the communities of America.

The Consecration of Youth. There is no more certain social force than the idealistic hunger of each new generation of young men and women. Youth is synonymous

with the power of a glowing vision. It has no power not to respond. Here is something to count on, to tie to. "Its going forth is sure as the morning." Like the widow's cruse of oil it does not fail. Nothing which pertains to man is more beautiful or dramatic than the great procession of young lives, a fair proportion of whom are always eager to devote themselves to altruistic adventure if the call comes timely and clear. There is no more marked nor heartening aspect of American civilization than this. The only question is of the specific direction of these self-devoted lives. Of them the little town furnished a disproportionate share. They have gone forth mostly to far fields, to the social service of the city, to foreign missions. To such, this book would like to believe that it presents a direct challenge and appeal. Home is the nearest spot of missionary ground. The little town is a field for altruistic service of thrilling importance. Here stands greatness humbly clad; here patriotic labour is involved with charm; here deep social processes are bound up with intimate personal contacts; here especially the high fortunes of the open country are to be centred and inspired; here lies the pleasant middle-ground through which if one will have it so the Garden of Eden merges into the City of God.

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